FOREIGN MAGIC

by

JEAN CARTER COCHRAN

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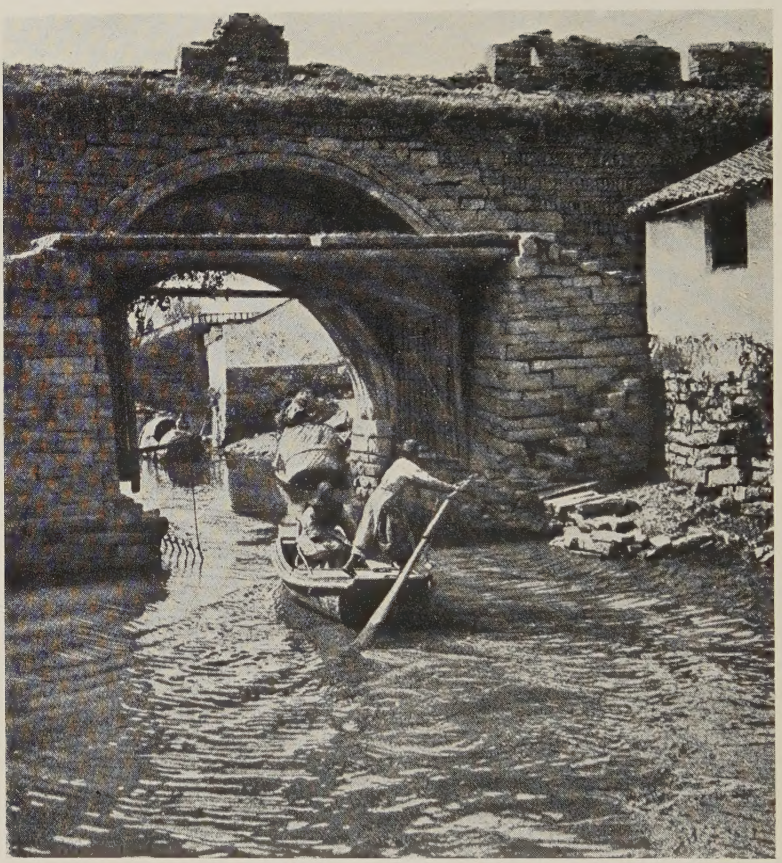

THE OLD WATER-WAYS OF CHINA HAVE AN INTEREST AND A CHARM THAT BRING NEW PLEASURES TO THE TRAVELLER AT EVERY TURN

FOREIGN MAGIC

TALES OF EVERY-DAY CHINA

BY

JEAN CARTER COCHRAN

AUTHOR OF "THE RAINBOW IN THE RAIN,"
"NANCY'S MOTHER," ETC.

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TO

S. C.

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

Not hedged about by sacerdotal rule
He walks the fellow of the scarred and weak,
Liberal and wise his gifts; he goes to school
To justice; and he turns the other cheek.

He looks not holy, simple his belief,
His creed for mystic visions do not scan;
The face shows lines, cut there by others' griefs,
And in his eyes is love of brother man.

Not self, nor self-salvation is his care,
He yearns to make the world a summer clime
To live in; and his mission everywhere
Is strangely like the Christ's in olden time.

No mediæval mystery, no crowned,
Dim figure, halo-ringed, uncanny bright:
A modern saint! A man who treads earth's ground,
And ministers to man with all his might.

—Richard Burton

IN writing the following sketches the author has received help from many sources, for which she is very grateful. She wishes to thank the editors of the *Outlook,* the *Missionary Review of the World, Woman's Work,* and the Woman's Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions for permission to reproduce stories that have already appeared in their magazines. She also desires to express particular gratitude to Mr. Lawrence Abbott, without whose encouragement and inspiration she would never have dared to attempt this little volume.

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FOREIGN MAGIC

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FOREWORD

SOMEWHERE in China the plains stretch mile upon mile, much farther than the eye can see. Many days it takes to traverse these plains by slow-going native cart, by donkey, or on foot, and the stranger is astonished at the numberless hamlets and tiny villages which come in sight, all so similar, and all so full of children. In the springtime the landscape seems to smile, for the whole world is dressed in shimmering green, and song-birds fly low over the tender stalks of grain, while the warm sun shines gaily down upon the scene. But when the days of autumn arrive, and the crops have all been garnered, the sordidness and grinding poverty of the land are laid bare, and it takes a stout heart and cheerful spirit in the traveller to keep him from being depressed and burdened by what he sees.

Somewhere in the heart of this great plain

is hidden a market town which shall be known, by way of disguise, as the city of Feng Ti Fu. The translation of the real name of this place reads like poetry, for it is, "The city that those who are far away love." In all the names of earth, surely none was ever more inspired nor a happier choice than this!

Feng Ti Fu is not without natural attractions. Through it runs the river, and on either side, like giant gateways, stand East and West mountains; for at this point the plains are intersected by ranges of rocky hills. If the book of the life of the city could be written, it would be one of tears and laughter, but the misery would far outweigh the gladness, for a shadow falls across the place from West Mountain crowned with its Buddhist temple, and the shadow of that temple has darkened many lives. The fear of death, and of the malice of evil spirits, has been responsible for countless crimes that have occurred within the city walls and out in the rocky caves of the mountain side.

Within recent years a new day has begun to dispel the darkness, and though the signs of the dawn are faint as yet, a feeling of change is in the air. Sounder ideas are taking the place of old superstitions, and, under the touch

of this new life, characters are developing and growing, and some who formerly resembled the brute beast are beginning to show on their faces a livelier intelligence. There are many causes at work to make this possible; the desire for education and for more conveniences, and the longing for less poverty and for more abundance. But the greatest cause of all is to be found in the lives and teaching of a little group of strangers from another land who have settled down in the country, moved by the pitifulness of the need and by the belief that in the lowest there is still a spark of the divine fire, waiting only to be rekindled.

The first years of the work of this group were marked by privations and hardships that others could never imagine, and which must be endured to be appreciated. Living in the primitive cottages with thatched roofs and rough floors, there were few necessities and no luxuries, while the evidences of antagonism and even hatred that were met with in the streets added to the loneliness and desolation. The church was housed in a lowly building made over for the purpose, and another equally lowly was used for a hospital. In fact, so poor was this structure that bits of mud from the

roof often dropped on the operating table while the doctor was working over a patient.

After sixteen years of earnest effort all this is changed; a new hospital stands in a commanding position overlooking the river, and a school for boys and another for girls now stand as models for the educational system of the whole province. Residences have been erected, and, by no means least in importance, an attractive church has been built, the clock on which rings out the hours over the city, the first town clock in all that part of China.

The author of this book was privileged to spend a year in China, and visited Feng Ti Fu, where she made the acquaintance of some of the people mentioned in these stories. Other characters and incidents have been gathered from reports, letters, and conversations, but let readers beware of trying to identify a single person; their efforts will be futile, since the author has allowed imagination to hold full sway, and has woven fact and fancy freely together in an attempt to make the country and people life-like to those who have never seen them.

No one should pick up this book hoping to find it a treatise on sociology or philanthropy, for it consists of but a few simple stories of the

every-day life of some very human people. Nevertheless, it is from humble material like this that a country's heroes have been made, and in the years to come China will say of some of them, as Kipling so proudly sings of England's sons,

Not in the thick of the fight,
Not in the press of the odds,
Do the heroes come to their height
Or we know the demigods.

They are too near to be great,
But our children will understand
When and how our fate
Was changed, and by whose hand.

Our children will measure their worth;
We are content to be blind;
For we know we walk on a new-born earth
With the saviours of mankind.

I

THE SHADOW ON THE LIGHT OF ASIA

I THINK a person's religion is like their skin; they are born with it and they cannot alter it. Besides, the Orientals are happy in their religion; then why under heaven should we seek to change it? I call it giving ourselves foolish airs." With the complacent manner of one who has put forth an absolutely unanswerable argument, my friend sipped her tea and started a lively discussion on world peace with her other neighbour.

"Happy in their religion!" At these words the tasteful drawing-room faded away, and I ceased to listen to the merry chatter around me, while Li Sao Tze's gentle face arose before my vision and I lost myself in the thought of my days in China.

Is it mere chance that on leaving the soft green shores of Japan, one must sail through a yellow sea before one can reach the yellow country and meet the yellow people, and must the religion be yellow because the skin is, I

wonder? We had sailed through the Yellow Sea on our voyage of discovery, and steamed up the river to Shanghai with our Occidental eyes wide open to miss no sight, our ears attentive to miss no sound, and our unwilling noses missing no scent of that strange land, for it seemed as if even the little breezes smelled yellow.

The tales of our childhood about Topsy-Turvy Land came to our minds as our ragged-queued rickshamen whisked us around corners, and we found to our dismay that we were expected to point the way to them, instead of their showing it to us. Newcomers must beware, if they do not want to be landed in some unsavoury corner of the native city where no word of English is spoken.

As we had a guide we were ultimately delivered in good order at our destination. Our first night on Chinese soil was a test as to whether we could stand the alarms of life in the Interior. We were regaled at dinner with stories of the famous Shanghai riot that had occurred shortly before our arrival, and also with detailed accounts of the massacre that had recently taken place in the south. It was all part of the day's work to those hardened to the

vicissitudes of life in China, but it stamped itself deeply on our impressionable minds.

After retiring that night I found that the tales to which we had listened still haunted my brain, and unable to sleep, suffered in imagination all the horrors that had been related. I must have been in bed about two hours when suddenly I heard shouts in the distance, and then what seemed like hundreds of hurrying footsteps and the most terrifying shrieks. I hastily arose and ran to the window and listened, shaking with fear, and fully convinced that the rioters were coming, thirsting for foreign blood. In intense anxiety I waited for the people of the house to sound the alarm and call us together to make our escape, but every one slept peacefully on, while each moment the din grew wilder. Finally, it swept past the house altogether.

"They have gone," I thought, "for some larger prey, but they will surely come back." I waited in vain for a summons, but as our friends did not seem to be at all apprehensive, I at last decided to try to sleep. I spent a restless night, however, and came down to break fast in a pensive mood.

"What was that horrible noise last night?" I inquired. "Was it a riot?"

"No, only a wedding party," my friends laughingly replied.

"A wedding party! What, then, were the blood-curdling outcries and discordant wails?"

"Oh, that was their singing, and their musical instruments."

"Well," I ejaculated fervently, "if that was a wedding, may I never hear a riot!"

In the weeks that followed, we had the diversion of watching one of the world's great pageants as it passed under our balcony: Chinese dandies in silks and satins, with the ever-present fan held to protect their eyes from the piercing rays of a semi-tropical sun; ladies in gaily decorated sedan chairs, and women of the poorer classes pushing wheelbarrows with three or four people in them; regiments of tall Sikhs with the steel flashing in their turbans; sailors and marines wearing the uniforms of many nations, ashore from the warships that lay in the river; lightly clad Lascars, swarthy seamen from the merchant ships. There were wedding and funeral processions with their accompanying din; one funeral procession took an hour to pass, and the glories of the embroidered robes of the Buddhist and Taoist priests caused much envy in the mind of one spectator. And not the least entertaining part

of the strange sights was a monkey in the courtyard across the way. It afforded amusement not only to the little Portuguese children that owned it, but to all the neighbours as well.

On one hot morning a little file of rickshas drew up at the front door, and there followed the usual squabble of liberally paid coolies protesting over the fare. Too much engrossed with the foreign street scene to pay much attention to the arrival of a few Americans, I did not even turn my head until I heard a baby's voice at my elbow.

"Auntie, auntie, here we are!" and on looking down, I found a mite, all dimples, tugging at my skirts.

Lois was right, there they were, and the proper things were said and done—the things one always does to a niece whom one has never seen before, and to the parents, whom one has not beheld for five years, and has travelled half way around the world to visit.

Behind these members of the family stood an unassuming woman clad in the blue cotton coat and black trousers which was the costume of her native town. She waited with a bright smile on her face, absorbed in the happiness of others, and watching with surprise the demonstrative ways of these strange foreigners. At

last we came to ourselves and Li Sao Tze was presented; we liked her from the first for her gentle, modest ways, and for her unselfishness. It was explained that while we were in the mountains she was to serve as *amah* and baby's nurse.

The family of Li Sao Tze belonged to the scholar class, the gentry we would call it, but they were in reduced circumstances and glad to eke out their income through her labours, and they would not "lose face" thereby, as she was away from home. Her husband was dead and her sons were "ne'er do weels," and we thought that it must be a comfort to her to be free from them for a season.

If Shanghai had been a wonder city to us, it is hard to imagine what it was to Li Sao Tze. Try and realise for yourself what your own sensations would be if you had lived in the third or fourth century in a small country town and were taken, without warning or preparation, to visit a modern city with all its conveniences and inventions. Fancy your excitement, and how you would open your eyes, and what stupid questions you would ask!

Not so Li Sao Tze; she kept her quiet way unabashed and apparently unimpressed. Almost without being told she learned how to

turn on the electricity, and though her only light at home had been a feeble wick floating in oil, she never changed her expression when the bright light flooded our rooms. She heard the bells ring at the push of a finger and saw a servant appear as if by magic. She saw carriages run along the smooth streets without horses or men to pull them, whereas, in her native town, the roads were full of mud-holes, and the élite were carried in sedan chairs, the middle-class went on mules, and the poor walked. Yet not one of these new-fangled things disturbed her Oriental calm or produced any signs of amazement. Often I longed to break through that outer shell of reserve and know the thoughts that stirred below it, but my lack of Chinese words, and her idea of good breeding, always prevented such intercourse.

Li Sao Tze was not stupid by any means; she went about her duties in a quiet, competent way, very different from the rougher country women who never could be trained to be good servants. It was surprising how softly and swiftly she did her work on those little cramped feet of hers, for they were not over three inches long. Every day throughout that long summer in the mountains, we would always meet her in the narrow, winding paths, carrying lit-

tle Lois. In the evening when we returned home after a picnic or a tea-party we would find Li Sao Tze at the top of the bungalow steps with the child in her arms. She would be standing there quietly, looking over the mountains where range was piled on range towards the glories of the sunset beyond.

In this case truly East and West had met and mingled, for the baby's arms would be twined tightly around Li Sao Tze's neck, and one needed only a quick glance at Li Sao Tze's face to see how she regarded her charge. It was a pretty picture—the dark impassive Oriental features and the laughing yellow-haired mite, with her pink cheeks and dimples. We would explain to Li Sao Tze that with her bound feet the baby was too large and too heavy for her to carry; but as soon as our backs were turned the little tyrant would say, "Li Sao Tze! *Bao* me!" and that willing slave would hasten to carry her. A Chinese woman can never refuse a child anything, and the exclamation, "Why, she wanted it!" is sufficient excuse for giving a baby anything from a banana to a carving knife.

In August Li Sao Tze came to her mistress about a strange lump which had been troubling her for some time. "Perhaps Mrs. Scott would

tell Dr. Scott; they say he is a very clever doctor, and he would give her some foreign medicine that would take it away?"

"But, Li Sao Tze, Dr. Scott would have to see the lump before he could give you the medicine."

"Oh, I never could let him do that; that is not our custom!" Then, with a brighter look, she continued, "But I will show it to you, Mrs. Scott, and you can tell him all about it."

It took two months to persuade Li Sao Tze to see the foreign doctor. By that time the lump had grown considerably and he sadly pronounced the word that makes an American turn sick and faint. He gently explained to her that if she were operated on immediately he might save her life, otherwise she could not live two years. She took the news very quietly and with no sign of fear or emotion. She said she would not be operated upon, for her sons were bitterly anti-foreign and would never allow it, even if she would consent to it.

It was a heavy cloud over our happiness to feel that this gentle creature was marked for such a painful death. Such suffering is bad enough in America, but it is infinitely worse in China, where the sick have no pity shown to

them, and the native quacks put the sufferer to horrid torture by way of treatment.

We returned with sad hearts to the inland station. We knew that when we arrived Li Sao Tze's sons would not permit her to remain as *amah* any longer, much as she would have liked to do so. She had shown strange confidence in being willing to go away with us at all, and had not even taken some earth with her from her native town, as the other *amah* had done, to mix in her tea to keep her from homesickness and the dangerous *feng shui* (evil spirits) of a strange place. When we reached our destination it turned out as we had feared. Li Sao Tze was forced to give up her position; her gentle sway was over, and then began a reign of terror for us under Weh Sao Tze, the Militant.

Li Sao Tze continued to come to do our sewing, and we saw her nearly every day. Very shocked was she over Weh Sao Tze's rough ways, and she would reprimand her for her coarse language to the children. She came regularly to the women's meetings, and would repeat the verses so sweetly and so understandingly that her teachers were sure she was a true Christian in her heart, though she dared not admit it on account of the harsh attitude of

her sons. Of all the hymns she liked best to sing "Jesus Loves Me." "For it rests my heart," she said. Poor Li Sao Tze! It might well rest her heart, for very little love had she known from the day she was born "only an unwelcome girl" up to this time when her sons grudged even food to her. Over her cradle had been sung the usual Chinese lullaby,

If a boy is born, in a downy bed
Let him be wrapped in purple and red;
Apparel bright and jewels bring
For the noble child who will serve the king.

If a girl is born, in coarse cloth wound,
With a tile for a toy, let her lie on the ground;
In her bread or her beer, be her praise or her blame,
And let her not sully her parents' good name.

Yet Li Sao Tze's lot was only the common one of Chinese women. One day she failed to appear at the Women's Class, or for the sewing. When she had been absent for two or three days, Mrs. Scott inquired about her from a neighbour who informed her that Li Sao Tze was ill. She hastened to see her and found the poor woman so very ill that she sent immediately for the foreign doctor, who pronounced the malady to be typhoid fever. He prescribed some remedies and tried to persuade Li Sao Tze's sons to take her to the foreign

hospital, where she could have proper treatment, but they would not listen to him and, as soon as his back was turned, threw the medicine out and called in a native quack.

Daily the foreigners visited the wretched hovel which Li Sao Tze called home, bringing soup and medicine. They always found the house filled with a crowd of curious neighbours talking at the top of their lungs, and each one suggesting some peculiar or deadly mixture—a truly restful atmosphere for a fever patient. Li Sao Tze bore it all with her usual patience but grew gradually weaker. At length one night she was very much worse and one of her sons climbed on the roof of the house, while the other went out on the mountain side to represent her spirit. The son on the roof would call to the spirit on the mountain to return, and the son on the mountain would cry in a weird falsetto, "Coming, coming!" and all the while Li Sao Tze lay below and listened.

The next day Li Sao Tze's mistress found her excited out of her former calm. Amidst the noise and confusion the sufferer clutched her friend's hand and whispered that her sons thought that she was going to die and so they had threatened to carry her out on the mountain side, as her spirit would haunt them if

AUTUMN SHADOWS ON AN ANCIENT ROAD

THE ROAD TO FENG TI FU,
THE CITY THAT THOSE WHO
ARE FAR AWAY LOVE

she died in the house. Mrs. Scott knew that if they did this she would probably be torn in pieces by wild dogs. She did her best to reassure Li Sao Tze, but there was nothing which she could do to prevent such cruelty, for the sons had absolute power, and could have caused the death of the foreigners if they had interfered with their plans. Mrs. Scott came home heavy-hearted. I wonder if any one would blame her for failing to see any happiness in the Taoist religion on that day?

The suspense continued for several days, and as we lay on our comfortable beds at night listening to the shrill autumn wind howling down the hillside, we were haunted by thoughts of the awful fate hanging over our gentle Li Sao Tze. We would shiver to think that at that very moment she might be out in the cold alone. Fortunately she rallied towards the last, and then passed away suddenly before her sons could execute their designs. The Christian ceremony so well suited to Li Sao Tze's quiet spirit was not permitted; instead, the wild cry of the hired mourners, the feasting, the burning of paper money, and other rites of a Chinese funeral were her lot. But we drew a sigh of relief that her heart was rested at last and freed from further sufferings.

Now that the long spring evenings have come, Li Sao Tze's daughter-in-law suddenly stops in the middle of her gossiping with the other women of the courtyard and says with a laugh, "Well, I must be off to wail a wail or two on my mother-in-law's grave." With a bowl of food in her hand for the departed spirit, she goes out on the mountain side where Li Sao Tze sleeps, and makes the soft spring night hideous with those blood-curdling wails so heartrending to a stranger, until he realises that such mourning is purely perfunctory. In China comedy and tragedy walk ever hand in hand.

II

WEH SAO TZE THE MILITANT

ONE beautiful afternoon in late October the tiny living-room of our Chinese house was flooded with sunshine which touched the soft red-stained walls and the vases of gay chrysanthemums that stood in every nook and corner. Through the casement window other chrysanthemums shyly peeped, as if standing on tiptoe in their garden bed, full of curiosity to see what their comrades were doing within.

After a two weeks' trip in a cramped house-boat, these surroundings seemed spacious indeed, so in deep content with our new environment, we sank into the comfortable armchairs. Then suddenly our Eden was invaded; we heard the clump, clump of a springless bound-foot in the courtyard outside, the bang of a door, and then the voice of our hostess saying,

"Weh Sao Tze, this is my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law from America."

On looking up I beheld the tallest, gauntest Chinese woman I have ever seen, making deep

ceremonial bows before us. Now mothers-in-law are held in great honour in China, but even in her desire to do respect to the aged foreign lady, Weh Sao Tze could not repress her consternation.

"Cannot they speak one word, not one little word?" she asked.

The pity and contempt in her voice needed no interpreter, though her language might. All our little store of learning seemed to be stripped from us, and for the moment this crude woman was a sage compared to ourselves. Having once heard Chinese spoken, one forever after holds any person in veneration who has mastered its intricacies—no matter if that individual, like Weh Sao Tze, had been born to it.

All this time Weh Sao Tze was bowing before us like an automaton, and in her awkwardness she apparently filled the tiny room. She had attempted to freshen her blue coat and untidy hair to do honour to the foreign ladies, but her unkemptness beggared description.

After the usual polite question to the mother-in-law as to her honourable age, the exclamation, "Why, I thought you were a great deal older!" was in order. Then the names and ages of the lady's sons were investigated and

commented on, and congratulation given upon her "great happiness." At last Weh Sao Tze's hostess gave her a decided hint to withdraw, and still shaking her head and muttering below her breath, "They can't speak a word, not a single word," she left us.

Immediately on Weh Sao Tze's disappearance the room seemed to regain its normal size, and we drew a sigh of relief to think that, for the time at least, the ornaments were intact. Turning to my sister-in-law with deep feeling, I exclaimed, "Who is Weh Sao Tze, and where did you collect such a wild specimen?"

Laughingly she replied, "You ought to have seen her when she was first caught—fresh from the country. She is to be our *amah* this winter."

"That's a pity," I murmured. "What a suffragette she would make; everything would have to give way before her convictions."

"Yes, she is really the man of the family, and manages her husband and sons like a general. It is hard for us to realise what heathenism really is until we encounter people like her. She had no idea of the difference between right and wrong; she informed me quite frankly, in fact, that the only harm in lying was in being found out. She has had twenty children,

but only three are with her. In a famine year she left one baby girl under a tree to die of exposure and another one she sold for a coat. She told me all this as though it was an everyday occurrence, as, alas, it is in this city! She was quite surprised when I exclaimed in my horror over her tale.

"But in the last two years she has seen a great light and is struggling hard to overcome her fearful gusts of temper and other vices," my sister-in-law continued. "You would respect her more if you knew her temptations. She was admitted to the church this autumn in the hope that its support would be of help."

"I can easily see that life would never be monotonous in Weh Sao Tze's vicinity," I replied. And it never was.

It was Christmas time before Weh Sao Tze really mastered the rudiments of housework; by that day she had learned the surprising facts that sheets belonged next to the mattress and not on top of the spread, that even husband and wife might not take a bath in the same water and, more astonishing yet, that the dish pan was not the usual place to brush one's teeth. Words fail me to tell of the peace and quiet that descended upon us at night when she had returned to the bosom of her own fam-

ily. Often I wondered if her husband enjoyed the blessed quiet of the day as we did the stillness of the night.

Christmas was to be a gala-day for the Christians and a feast was to be served for them in the new foreign house. The Boys' School had prepared an entertainment for the evening which was considered the social event of the winter, as the head official and his wife were invited and tickets were in great demand.

Great was Weh Sao Tze's excitement. She had already begun to have more regard for her personal appearance; fewer straws from her rough bed were to be seen sticking to her hair, and her coat was evidently washed at least once a month, but for Christmas day she really outshone herself. She embroidered a new hat and gay shoes, washed and starched her coat, and really was an example of what soap and a little—a very little—godliness can do. From that day forward it was interesting to see Weh Sao Tze cleansed and brushed, with her Bible and hymn-book tied up in a gaily coloured handkerchief, and her two boys, also much brushed and washed, beside her on the way to church.

One of the duties of the *amah* was to light our bedroom fires before we arose in the morn-

ings. It seemed to me that I had just fallen asleep on Christmas Eve, when I heard a rattle and bang at the stove and the sound of a roaring fire just built. The house was dark, and there was not a sign of dawn, but I had no Chinese words in which to demand an explanation; so I lay still awaiting developments. Soon from the distance I heard the master of the house approaching, and I listened to him ordering Weh Sao Tze away in no uncertain tones. On inquiry I found that it was only half-past two, but Weh Sao Tze had no clock, and in her zeal had decided that now it must be morning. Three different times did she start those fires, until at last in self-defence, at six o'clock in the morning, we let her have her way. Do you wonder that some people think that by sheer perseverance the East will conquer the West?

The day passed off with much festivity. The boys outdid themselves as shepherds and wisemen; the kids, which they carried in lieu of lambs, bleated plaintively the while, giving a touch of realism to the scene. That evening, weary of our part as hosts, we slipped off our best Chinese coats and our formal bows, and looked forward to a refreshing sleep. Alas, and alack, it was not to be, for our picturesque

THE BOYS FROM THE FENG TI FU SCHOOL LIFT THEIR SKIRTS DAINTILY TO AVOID THE MUD OF THE ROUGHLY PAVED STREET AS THEY MARCH TO CHURCH

thatched roof caught fire from a defective stovepipe, and Christmas night was spent in watching our precious belongings ascend in the form of smoke.

Weh Sao Tze performed wonderful feats of valour in these exciting hours. She picked up treasures of silver and jewelry in fire-menaced rooms and carried them to their rightful owners, which was a harder strain on her than saving them. The report circulated that she had actually carried a bureau from one room to another; and, last but not least, she found the table boy looting the aforesaid bureau, duly reported him, and he was forthwith dismissed. For days afterwards her star was decidedly in the ascendant; the Chinese took pleasure in repeating all the slight symptoms of honesty ever observed in her family, and her praise was in everybody's mouth.

My sister-in-law said to me in triumph, "What if she is awkward? She moved my bureau."

And I was forced to reply, "Strength goes further than gracefulness when it comes to moving bureaus. I'm glad she has muscle, for I am afraid her manners will always lack the repose that marked the Revere, or was it the De Vere family?"

Sad to relate, however, toward spring Weh Sao Tze's star began to wane. Mr. Dooley wisely maintains that a "hero should be shot in the act." Rumours of petty thefts came from time to time, but it was her temper that brought matters to a climax. Her disposition and that of the new table boy were not compatible, and that is putting the case mildly. Weh Sao Tze realised her failing and really tried very hard to overcome it, but day by day the struggle grew more severe, and her angry voice could be heard over the entire compound and down the street. At length, after having given her about a dozen last chances, the crisis came and she was dismissed. She packed her things and withdrew stormily, but as she left, she turned to the master of the house and said in a queer, stifled tone,

"Doctor Scott, you will always look after my boys, will you not?"

A little puzzled by the sudden change of manner, the master promised and she departed.

Soon the table boy had his dismissal, too, but before he left all the silver had to be counted. According to Chinese custom, he had been put in charge of the dining-room, and if anything were lacking he was responsible and was required to replace the missing article. Knives,

forks, and spoons were carefully gone over, and eight solid silver forks were not to be found. The boy asked permission to search the premises, which was granted, and with the cook and the gatekeeper as witnesses, he started his quest. First the compound was examined with no result; then the house, and in a stove stored in the attic, close to the door of Weh Sao Tze's room, the forks were found at last.

Their disappearance will always be a mystery. The boy may have taken them and put them there to throw suspicion on Weh Sao Tze, or she may have done it to get the boy into trouble, or have hidden them there in the hope that she herself might some day have a chance to smuggle them out of the house. Even those familiar with involved Chinese reasoning have had to give up this riddle. The news of the theft and the subsequent find spread like wildfire, and was soon known throughout the city.

That evening was the first peaceful time in weeks; only Solomon, who had some experience with women's tempers, or any soldier who has been within sound of the incessant firing of big guns, can appreciate what the surcease meant.

About nine o'clock, however, Weh Sao Tze's little boy appeared and asked the doctor to go

immediately, as his mother was very ill. The doctor was appalled, for he guessed in a moment what it meant. She had taken opium "to save her face," and to throw the blame on ourselves or on the table boy.

It was a night of terrible suspense. The thought that any human being should come to such a pass through us made us heart-sick. Besides which it was famine year, and anti-foreign feeling was always smouldering, ready to leap forth and annihilate us at any moment. Through the long hours the doctor worked desperately. He found Weh Sao Tze had taken a large dose, though she denied it, and only towards morning did he see signs of hope. At breakfast time he returned utterly exhausted, leaving Weh Sao Tze sufficiently recovered to be treated by his assistant.

The most amazing thing to us was to find that for once Chinese opinion was with the foreigner. Usually when a person endeavours to commit suicide, the other person involved is blamed whether guilty or not, but this time all the street condemned Weh Sao Tze. The Christians among them shook their heads in horror and said:

"We have never heard of a Christian trying to kill herself before."

Now arose the question as to how to discipline Weh Sao Tze. The church could not overlook such unseemly conduct on the part of a member, yet the leaders feared that if she were punished, with the weight of public opinion against her, she might again seek to destroy herself. It was finally decided to suspend her from membership for a few months. At the next communion service a very chastened Weh Sao Tze attended; she could not, of course, take part in the Sacrament, but when the congregation bowed their heads for the Lord's Prayer, she whispered to her old mistress who knelt beside her,

"Mrs. Scott, may I repeat 'Our Father,' if I say it very, very softly?"

So one more penitent added her voice to the thousands who through the ages have sought forgiveness. Such was Weh Sao Tze; surely she was "ower bad for blessing, and ower gude for banning," like Rob Roy.

III

MR. CHANG OF THE CRYSTAL SPRING VILLAGE

A GREY evening had settled on the village of the Crystal Spring. There had been a soft drizzle all day and even the Crystal Spring lay deep in mud and so belied its name. There was, in fact, nothing much but mud to be seen from the narrow streets where the little pools of yellowed water stood to the walls of the houses that were plainly built of no other material than mud. And looking out into the twilight over the fields, the country, also, presented the same monotonous, muddy-brown tint.

Though the Chinese are a good deal like hens in their attitude of mind towards water in general and rain in particular, this evening the weather had failed to keep them indoors, for had not the village schoolmaster promised to tell them many wonderful things of the golden age of China when the sages walked the land and were able to converse, not only with human

beings, but with the fairy folk? As every intelligent person knows, in those extraordinary days the animals talked not only with each other, but with men and women. The village necromancer claimed that they did it yet, and he told how a fox had come into a lonely house not many *li* away and, turning itself into a crying child, wrought much mischief until they called him in and he frightened the fox away. To the initiated, the moral of this tale is plain; it behooved one to keep on good terms with the necromancer, and to undertake nothing without his counsel.

To-night the schoolmaster looked over his little audience of men and boys, wondering which story to tell them. They waited in a respectful silence, for he had taken his degree, and the only person in the village who did not stand in awe of him was his wife. If Mr. Chang had known Greek, his sympathy would have been drawn to Socrates and his home life.

Slowly he began: "Æons ago, almost at the dawning of our golden age, there lived on the edge of a lotus stream a mussel contented and happy. One spring morning when the apricots were in bloom, tempted by the beauty of the day, he went out on the river bank to sun himself. A bittern, which was passing by, per-

ceived the mussel, and with none of those courteous ceremonies customary in polite society, pecked at the wary shellfish. The mussel, realising that he who hesitates is lost, wasted no time but nipped the bird's beak. The bittern, surprised and frightened, exclaimed, 'If you do not let me go to-day, and if you refuse to let me go to-morrow, there will be a dead mussel.' His would-be victim rejoined, 'If I stay indoors to-day, and if I don't come out to-morrow, there surely will be a dead bittern!' "

Suddenly at this climax a wild face was thrust into the door of the schoolroom and an excited voice shouted, "There is a foreign devil arrived at the inn, and you had better all be quick, for we think he is going to undress!"

Magic surely cannot have disappeared from China; the speed with which the room was emptied of all but the schoolmaster and the necromancer was simply miraculous. The necromancer felt it incumbent on his dignity to move more slowly; the schoolmaster, who was at heart a gentelman, turned towards his home. He would call later with ceremony when the rude villagers had left. Curiosity soon got the better of the necromancer, however, and murmuring to himself, "I have heard it said that these foreigners have a hole in their chest

through which a stick is run by which they are carried by coolies; I must see if it is true," he turned and hurried to the inn.

The scene at the inn was amusing enough; the doors and windows were full of heads, and those who had a few *cash* with which to buy tea had even entered the house itself and were drinking, while their eyes seemed glued on the unfortunate foreigner. The inn was a poor place; the only thing which could be said in its favour was that it was dry. It consisted of one long room where all the guests ate, dressed, and slept. At one end was a fire of stalks burning; there was no chimney for the smoke to escape, so the foreigner sat beside the blaze with the tears running down his face from the suffocating smoke, trying in vain to get dry. He had removed his coat, which was dripping wet, and beside him on the floor lay a bicycle covered with the all-prevailing mud.

Even the man's sense of humour had been almost washed away, but when he saw the amazement on every countenance as he started to clean his wheel, he could not repress a smile. He had been forced to walk a long distance on account of the rain, and the consequence was that none of the Chinese knew what the bicycle was for, so they kept at a safe distance from

it. As he spun each wheel around thoughtfully, the eyes of the crowd grew as large as saucers. One of them whispered, "It's a new kind of gun!" Some of them put their fingers in their ears expecting a loud report; others withdrew to a still greater distance. Nothing happened, however, and at that moment the necromancer entered and speedily drew his own conclusions; this was evidently some foreign magic, and it was clearly to his advantage to stand in with the foreigner and divide the profits.

"You have come a long road to-day?" he said, going directly up to the foreigner.

"Yes," replied the man, "one hundred *li*." (About thirty miles.)

"Ha! I was right," thought the necromancer. "It is magic indeed. No man could walk or be carried by coolies a distance like that in such weather."

So he asked still another question, "Then the coolies did not carry you by means of the pole stuck through your chest?"

The foreigner was puzzled; then he remembered the ancient rumour about the foreigners and replied, "No, I rode this wheel."

The necromancer was dazed, but by this time the crowd had grown bolder and felt like ask-

ing a few questions on their own account. They drew closer in a smaller circle and a perfect volley of questions followed: "Where was he from?" "What was his name?" "How did he button his collar?" "What was his vest for?"

Finally, weary of responding to so much insistent curiosity, and remembering his purpose in coming, the stranger thought that it was his turn to lead the conversation. Turning to the necromancer, he said, "I have come to your village to tell you about one of our sages that lived many years ago." The people, however, were too interested in the present to stop to hear past history and they would not listen.

Then a bright idea struck the traveller. He said, "I see that this inn room is very large. I will ride this wheel around the place for twenty minutes and let you see how it works, if after I have finished you will promise to listen to me for twenty minutes."

This proposition appealed to his audience and a space was quickly cleared. Amid the "Ahs!" and "Ehs!" of the crowd, he mounted the wheel and rode around and around for a long twenty minutes; then he dismounted, saying, "Now it is my turn to talk," and he began to tell his story. True to their bargain, the

Chinese listened quietly, interrupting only with a question now and then, so that they might fully understand.

After he had concluded his story, a number of the curious ones bought his tracts and copies of the gospels, and one old man asked, "How long ago did you say this good man lived?"

"Over nineteen hundred years ago," the foreigner replied.

The old man looked very sad. "And you foreigners have known this glad news for nineteen hundred years, and have only just come to tell us about it now! I cannot understand that."

Some of the more intelligent of the group lingered for a few moments, but it was growing late and they at last said a reluctant goodbye. With a weary sigh the foreigner turned to undress, when he heard a quiet voice behind him say, "Good evening, honourable sir, may I ask your revered name?"

On looking around, he beheld the village teacher, Mr. Chang, making deep bows of greeting. Snatching his spectacles from his eyes to show that he knew the rules of Chinese etiquette, the stranger replied, with an equally deep bow, "My humble name is Doctor Scott."

"May I also inquire your lofty longevity?" continued the teacher.

"My years are few and small; I am only forty," replied Dr. Scott.

"Ah!" exclaimed the other, "I thought you were a great deal older. Now will you kindly inform me the name of your renowned country?"

"The name of my country is America."

At the word "America," Mr. Chang's face brightened visibly. "Why that is the country of Washington and Lincoln," he said joyfully.

Interested at once, Dr. Scott invited him to be seated, and inquired where he had heard of Washington and Lincoln. The teacher eagerly explained that when he had gone to Nanking to pass his examination for his degree, he had met a foreigner at the door of the examination hall who had sold him a book containing the lives of Washington and Lincoln.

"They were great and good men. Could you tell me more about them?" he asked.

Very gladly Dr. Scott did so, and finished by saying, "Washington and Lincoln were true lovers of freedom and of their fellowmen, but their ideas were received from a still greater teacher who taught nineteen hundred years ago. Let me read you what he says," and drawing the Gospel of St. John from his pocket

he read, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

"Yes," said the teacher, "those are wise words; that is the kind of freedom we need in China. Will it weary you too much to tell me about this very wise man?"

Delighted at this wonderful opportunity, Dr. Scott told him about that life which was the most perfect of all lives, and the teacher eagerly drank in every word. At length he rose to go, saying he would return in the morning to hear more. Sadly Dr. Scott explained that he had to hurry on at daylight to see a dying friend, but he gave the teacher a book of the Gospels, and promised to return at some future time.

It was now late, and very softly Mr. Chang stole through the deserted street and quietly opened the door of his rude home, hoping not to disturb his sleeping spouse. The hope was vain; she had lain awake and full of protest. He was greeted with questions such as, "Where in the world have you been? A pretty hour this to be coming in! What will the neighbours say?"

"A good deal," the poor teacher thought, "if they could hear you talk," but he wisely replied, "I have been to the inn and talked to the

foreigner, and he told me a most wonderful thing about a sage who came to earth to teach us to love everybody—our neighbours, and even strangers."

"Foolish words they were! Why, think what a difference it would make if I should love Wang Mah!" and turning herself scornfully in bed, she went soundly to sleep.

What a difference indeed! His wife's daily battles with Wang Mah were the scandal and excitement of the whole village; combat was waged from dawn to dewy eve, year in and year out. Mrs. Chang had the sharper tongue, but Wang Mah reviled more effectively, and could scream louder. By a course of watchful waiting, the former often got in the last word when the latter had screamed herself hoarse. For these women to love one another would be restful and beautiful beyond his wildest hope.

Having assured himself that his wife was really asleep, Mr. Chang sat down by the little flickering lamp and began to read his new book. Thoughtfully and slowly he read it in order to comprehend the wonderful story. Not once did he look up until a faint streak of dawn reminded him that he must retire, if he wished any peace for the next fortnight.

It was a very much puzzled necromancer

who arose on the next morning, pondering over the follies of foreigners in general and this one in particular; to have perfectly good magic at one's command and fail to make a profit from it, was worse than foolish; it was madness.

Mrs. Chang, too, was very much disturbed by the foreigner's visit. Surely he had bewitched her husband. Loud was her lamenting over the wasted oil; the long day through she could talk and think of nothing else. But all day long the teacher did not hear her, for his thoughts were elsewhere following his newly found Master through the fields of Galilee, and ever in his ears rang the words, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

IV

PÈRE PERRIN

THREE ravens flew overhead, their black wings casting a sinister shadow over the land; suddenly, with hoarse croaks, they wheeled and descended on a brown field which showed not even a blade of grass where once there had been verdant crops.

"If our friends, the ravens, find food to eat in this forlorn country, it is more than we shall do, Père Perrin."

Père Perrin shook his head sadly. "Now I know what 'the abomination of desolation' means, Père Le Brun. I always used to wonder about it. Look, we are coming to the Chang village; we shall soon see what our poor children are suffering here."

Slowly and footsore they plodded to the little hamlet, sorrowful because of the sights they had seen, and the stories they had heard. Père Perrin fingered his rosary and his lips moved constantly, though no sound escaped them.

Père Le Brun knew that he was praying for his flock.

For fifty years these two good Fathers had lived in China; they had studied at the same seminary in France and had sailed on the same ship to the Far East. The result of this daily and hourly companionship was that, as Père Le Brun used laughingly to say, "We even think the same thoughts; we have no need to talk."

They had often seen destitution. Even in good years, the streets were full of hungry people, but in the past summer there had been floods that broke all records, and during the winter came the most appalling famine that they had ever known. With the February cold, terrible rumours reached them of the conditions in their country parishes, so they had decided to make a tour of inspection to see what could be done. The results had confirmed their worst fears, and Père Le Brun noticed that Père Perrin seemed to age greatly from day to day.

On the outskirts of the village they met an old man in a single ragged garment; his teeth chattered when the cold wind struck him. At first they did not recognise him, but when he approached them and began to speak, they

saw to their consternation that it was Chang, the head man of the hamlet, who had been a prosperous, well-dressed farmer when last they had seen him. Even in his misery he did not forget his native courtesy. "Ah, good Fathers, are you out in the country?" (It is always proper in China to ask an obvious question by way of salutation.)

"Yes, Mr. Chang, we are visiting our hungry sheep. But where are your doors and windows, and where are the roofs of your houses?"

"The hungry wolf, Père Perrin, has come and eaten them all," he replied.

It was easy to see that grim want was stalking through the village. A crowd of hungry, gaunt people soon gathered, clad in rags, and with the look of famished animals. It was a subdued and orderly group, however; no demonstration of suffering was made, and only dumb curiosity and wonder were shown. They had been a quiet, respectable people in their prosperity, and they were equally peaceful in their adversity. A few scrawny little hands tugged at the skirts of the Fathers' gowns, for the children remembered the sweetmeats that these friends always carried for them at other visits. The Fathers had not forgotten the little ones, and they were soon munching solemnly.

Père Perrin turned again to Mr. Chang. "I see there are no pigs or dogs in sight. Are they all gone, and what are you living on?"

"The scum from the ponds and the bark from the trees will have to keep us until next harvest," was the reply.

The kindly priest groaned, and drawing a purse from his gown, opened it and extracted a few Mexican dollars. "Take these, Mr. Chang, and buy food for the villagers and yourself. I wish it were twice as much, but it is all we have left from our last remittance. The next is not due for another month."

The Chinaman shook his head. "It's no use, Père Perrin, it's no use; there's no food to be bought nearer than the *Fu,* and we are too weak to walk there and carry supplies back. Our buffaloes are gone long ago."

Père Perrin sighed, but returned the purse to his pocket; he knew the man spoke truly, and that he must save his scanty store for those it could succour. He bade a sorrowful farewell to the villagers, and raising his hand in blessing, turned and left them.

"My blessing was all that I could give them," he said to Père Le Brun sadly, as they started on their homeward way.

It was noon when they left the Chang vil-

lage, and they did not reach the *Fu* until late in the evening. They had taken no food, for there was none to buy. Hungry, therefore, and almost fainting, they stumbled along the deep ruts of the narrow roads, and it was with much relief that at last they saw the little twinkling lights of the distant city. When they reached their humble Chinese house, Père Perrin refused to eat.

"I fast to-night with my starving people," he replied to his faithful servant Lao Liu, when he urged the evening bowl of rice upon the exhausted Father.

After a few minutes' rest, Père Perrin quietly arose and went into the tiny chapel. All the long hours of that night he spent in prayer for the famished multitudes.

"I simply had to say my paternosters, for if ever my children need their daily bread it is to-day," explained Père Perrin as the two Fathers lingered a little longer than usual over their frugal breakfast.

While he was speaking Lao Liu entered and handed Père Perrin a note, stating that it had just come by special messenger from Feng Ti Fu. Père Perrin opened the letter and read it aloud—the two old men had no secrets from each other. It ran as follows:

Feng Ti Fu.

My dear Père Perrin,

Our friends in America have sent my colleagues and myself money for famine relief work; the American Red Cross Society has also put supplies at our disposal. On behalf of our station and the Famine Relief Committee, I am sending you five hundred dollars for use in your district; later I hope to increase the amount. You and I realize, Père Perrin, that hunger knows no creed. With kindest regards for Père Le Brun and yourself,

Sincerely yours,

Père Perrin laid the letter down and for a moment could not speak. Then he said, "The *bon Dieu* never forgets us, Père Le Brun; surely he has prompted this thought of the benevolent American doctor. I cannot help feeling that he must love our friend especially dearly, for he puts so many kinds things into his heart to do. Do you remember that two years ago, when the doctor operated on my eyes, that he took me into his own house because there was no room in the hospital? And what tender care both he and his wife gave me! I have changed my mind a little about heretics since I knew them. It may be, Père Le Brun, that when at last we reach heaven's high gate the kind Americans will speak a word for us to good St. Peter."

There was little time for talk, however, with

the ready money at hand and the poor dying at their doors. With all his gentle ways Père Perrin had a great deal of executive ability, and it did not take him long to lay out a campaign of relief measures.

"Père Le Brun, perhaps it would be better for you to go to Wuhu and oversee the work there. I will stay here and forward supplies to you as they come in; you can take two of the lay helpers with you. I shall live in the house-boat at present and be ready to receive the stores as soon as they come up the river; but before you go we must send a wheelbarrow of provisions to the Chang village. I cannot get those poor patient people off my mind."

Thus quickly was relief work under way, but before leaving for the boat Père Perrin wrote the following letter: *

March 1st, 1911.

Dear Dr. Scott:

I thank you most heartily for your kind letter and your sympathy toward our poor Christians. Poor certainly they are, and in some districts the starving are the great majority. In one locality, for instance, where the ground is low and can hardly support the inhabitants

* This letter is an exact copy of a letter written by Père Perrin, a Belgian priest, to an American doctor. Père Perrin's own name has been retained in this volume as a tribute to his saintly character and to the unselfish service in which he gave his life.

in good years, the mortality has been very great and must still increase. Our work is now too extensive for our resources, and the laws passed against the church oblige our friends at home to start so many good works that the alms sent out to foreign missions are yearly decreasing. If difficult to balance the account in common years, what difficulty in a time of famine! And yet it is not this reason that prompts me to appreciate your kindness, when you cut out such a big part of your own funds to be able to help us. There are many pagans as destitute as our Christians, but you see in them people redeemed by the blood of our Saviour, sons of the same Lord, future partakers, as I hope, of eternal bliss, and there united forever. What you are doing now is one of such deeds that must be known *"ut vidsant opera vesta bone et glorificent Patrum vestrum qui in caelo est."* I trust it will lead some to a better view of things, and destroy some prejudice here on earth.

I will distribute your funds to the different districts, requesting our missionaries to have it served out to our Christians in your name and require them to pray at all our intentions, especially for you and the mission staff of your station.

I will do the same myself and beseech our Lord to supply me in granting his divine blessing. Believe me, dear doctor,

Yours most faithfully,
Perrin
F.

During the next few weeks Père Perrin hardly took time to eat; friendly officials promised to aid him, but he had to superintend everything to see that the people received their due portion and that none of it stuck to official fingers. Rumours began to reach him that ill-

A FUEL GLEANER FROM THE GROUP OF PATIENT-SPIRITED PEOPLE IN A FAMINE-STRICKEN VILLAGE

ness had broken out in Feng Ti Fu, and that the people were dying like flies. At length a Chinese came to him with a sad face and told him he had just had a letter from his brother in that city, saying that Dr. Scott and another missionary had been stricken and that the doctor's life was despaired of.

"It is strange, Père Perrin, but the people in the street who love him for his kind deeds are saying, 'He saved others, himself he cannot save.' They do not know that this was said of one other long ago."

"Nor do they know the power of prayer to our good God," replied Père Perrin firmly.

Immediately Père Perrin sent word to the priests at his chapels that masses should be said twice daily for his friend's recovery. He himself worked all day, and now that Père Le Brun was away no one knew how long were his night vigils on behalf of his people and the man who lay so ill. But his frail human frame could not stand the strain; one morning he awoke too giddy to arise, and lay there burning with fever. Lao Liu wished to send immediately for Père Le Brun but he was strictly forbidden to do so.

"Would you have all those people die whom he is trying to save? It is bad enough for me

to give up; neither will I have him exposed to contagion. For the same reason you may not take me to the hospital at Feng Ti Fu; I will not endanger the lives of our friends there; we must worry through alone."

Unfortunately, Père Perrin's ideas of medicine and of the treatment of fevers had been brought with him from France fully fifty years before. He ordered Lao Liu to seal up the windows so that no breath of air should reach him, and to give him no water, no matter how much he might plead for it. Under this régime he grew steadily worse and, finally, at the end of the week yielded to Lao Liu's entreaties that the boat should sail up the river to Feng Ti Fu. Now nearly delirious, Père Perrin wrote a note to the hospital asking for shelter. His English was almost forgotten, and the letter written by fever-shaken fingers was so illegible that the Americans could not read it.

The consequence was that when Lao Liu arrived with his loved master on a stretcher, they were not prepared for a patient; but they all loved Père Perrin, and a vacant room was soon made ready, and the old priest was presently resting comfortably in a clean bed. His friend, Dr. Scott, had passed the crisis and was slowly coming back to the life which he thought that

he had laid down forever. He was still too ill to attend Père Perrin, but the same skilful doctor and nurse who had saved him were eager to serve the saintly priest. Everything that human tenderness could do was done, but worn out with privations and long vigils, Père Perrin gradually sank. Père Le Brun was sent for and one glance at Père Perrin told him the story. He asked that he might administer the last rites of the church, and the sad office was soon performed. When the little service was over he still knelt beside his old comrade; the nurse standing near saw the sick man's lips moving, and she whispered to Père Le Brun,

"Look, he is trying to speak."

But Père Le Brun shook his head and answered, "Père Perrin always prayed as he lived and he will die praying."

It was a beautiful May morning when Père Perrin went to sleep. The gardens were full of the scent of blossoms, and all the walks were edged with iris; the arches were covered with a little white climbing rose which the Chinese call the "Tree of Fragrance," and that looked like a filmy cloud against the blue background of the sky. The Mission group gave Père Perrin of the best they had, softly lining the rude cof-

fin and casting over it a pall of purple cloth; on this they laid a cross of lavender iris.

"He deserves a monarch's colours," they told Père Le Brun, "though we doubt if any monarch was ever so greatly loved."

Late that afternoon they bore him back to his own people. A little group gathered on the hospital steps to say farewell. They watched the sad procession go down the flowery path to the gate, and then lost sight of it for a few minutes as it passed through the city streets; but later they saw it take the narrow road through the young budding wheat until the winding river was reached. Père Le Brun walked beside his friend as he had done for the last fifty years.

With tear-dimmed sight they turned to leave and found, standing behind them, the quiet, dignified figure of the Confucian teacher. "Ah, Ladies!" he exclaimed, "we Chinese find a proverb in our sacred Mencius: 'The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart'."

V

A CHINESE DOCTOR

"DO not take off your shoes until you come to the river brink," so runs the pithy Chinese proverb, from which the wayfaring man, though a foreigner, may easily gather that bridges are scarce in some parts of the Flowery Kingdom.

Dong Sien Sung, with his face turned towards home and the setting sun, was too engrossed in other thoughts to dwell on proverbs, although he and his trusty steed had forded many streams that day. Can you see them as they threaded their way carefully along the narrow paths so full of stones and pitfalls? To stumble might mean a headlong fall into the unpleasantly wet field that bordered the way, and if the donkey had fallen there would have been damage done to the bedding, for in China it is not only fashionable, but necessary, to carry one's own bedding when one takes more than a day's journey. Do not be deceived into believing that Dong Sien Sung

looked in any way ridiculous as he rode aloft on top of his roll of bedding, for it is a fact that a Chinese gentleman never loses his dignity.

Fortunately for Dong Sien Sung, his donkey now knew every stone in the road, and every mud-hole thereof that was more than a week old, so the man could give himself up undisturbed to his meditations. Mechanically he answered the polite inquiries from late workers in the fields. These were obvious questions such as: "You are travelling to-day?" or "You are in the country this afternoon?" and he replied, "Yes, and you are bringing in the last of the harvest?" The city folk and the country folk both have their respective codes of etiquette.

But what was troubling Dong Sien Sung? For he had forgotten altogether the wise advice of the sages; he had already taken off his shoes, and was struggling almost over his depth in the midstream of his dilemma. The keynote to his difficulty lay in the words that had been ringing in his ears all day almost like a refrain, "A thousand *taels* a year." To Dong Sien Sung that sum meant comparative wealth, a tripling of his present salary, and no cause for trebling worry certainly.

On his recent visit to the busy port of Ching

Kiang he had met an old friend who had inquired politely how he was, and what his prospects were. He had answered that he was well and enjoying his work, and his only regret was that he was not earning quite as much for his family as he would like.

"It is a favourable hour when I met you," his friend exclaimed; "I have been looking for a foreign-trained doctor like yourself to settle with me in the Interior. I have a chance to start in business there, but I do not want to take my children where there are only Chinese practitioners; we have learned too much for that. I can promise you at least a thousand *taels* a year; the inhabitants are very progressive and eager for a man who can use the foreign medicine."

Dong Sien Sung shook his head. "To stay with Dr. Scott, who needs me, would be 'Following the Way'," he replied, for he was well versed in the classics.

His friend, however, refused to have the proposition declined so summarily, and said that he would leave the offer open for a few weeks until Dong Sien Sung had thought it over more carefully. Now the trouble with Dong Sien Sung was that he had a conscience and, moreover, it was a well-trained Christian

one. On the face of it, the offer was most alluring, and one that few really progressive young men could resist; but there was another side to be considered. Without doubt he owed everything to the foreigners, and as he rode, his thoughts went back to his childhood with its pitiful struggle against poverty while the shadow of starvation constantly fell across his path. Then a missionary had come and put him and his brother into school, for this friend had seen possibilities in the two ragged boys.

Dong Sien Sung had been unruly and unappreciative of the advantages given him. The teachers had often been unable to understand his view-point, and some of the foreigners' ways seemed senseless to him; but underneath it all he had become dimly conscious of a great love, and a desire to benefit him, which had at last won the day. He had received as good a medical education as the missionary college could give, hampered as it was by the Chinese restrictions against dissection and the study of anatomy, and when a new station was opened in the north under a foreign surgeon he had gone there as assistant and student. Under the care of his new teacher he had grown from a raw, awkward, and often moody young man, to be a very skilful assistant, who gave ether

Photograph by D. B. S. Morris, Hwai Yuen, China

THE OX MAKES A GENTLE STEED FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE OF THE ARROGANT DRAGON

WHEN THE THERMOMETER FALLS IN CHINA, ON GOES ANOTHER LAYER OF PADDED GARMENTS

and handed instruments like an expert. In his thoughts Dong Sien Sung was too modest to claim all this for himself, but he knew that in many ways he was indispensable to the station.

The foreigners came to him about questions of Chinese etiquette, or when the mission had a chance to buy a bit of land, and he saw to it that they were not cheated. In the last six months Dr. Scott had left him more and more in charge of the primitive hospital, and he enjoyed the sense of responsibility, while the foreign doctor was thus enabled to do some original work in studying Oriental diseases. Dong Sien Sung knew that mission stations were poor, and that they could only afford to pay their helpers a living wage. His salary could not be raised without raising that of the other workers, and yet there was a sense of dissatisfaction and uneasiness that his income was so far below what he might earn in other places.

So his river was a very deep and a very muddy one, and the bank of decision seemed a long way off. By the time that he had studied the subject to this extent they were going through the narrow street of the village of the Arrogant Dragon. The name was the only pretentious thing about the hamlet, for the

half-tumbled-down mud houses with their thatched roofs looked far from arrogant. Perhaps the dragon, while in a fit of rage, had nibbled pieces out of the walls and pulled the straw from the roofs and then had retired in high dudgeon to the ruined temple which was his abode. As he entered the village the traveller passed a water-coolie with his two buckets swung on a pole over his shoulder.

"If it had not been for the foreigners I might be doing that," thought Dong Sien Sung; "I am not so badly off after all."

Unfortunately, such worthy thoughts were banished, for not far away the young doctor caught sight of a little procession. Some military official and his retinue were travelling in state. "Rather a scratch lot," an English soldier would have called them, but to Dong Sien Sung they typified much that he admired. The official rode on horseback on a gaily caparisoned animal, and in front and behind him marched ragged soldiers with large red characters printed on their uniforms, and bearing paper parasols or flying pennants. The officer rode in dignity with a fan held up to his eyes to keep the rays of the setting sun from them. Firearms seemed to be generally lacking, but

as long as the party had fans and parasols what need had they of muskets? *

Dong Sien Sung did not care much for the military glory; that part of the procession had no attractions for a man of education, but it was the sight of the official button and the many coloured peacock feathers that wrought the mischief. What would he not give to have one of his sons attain that honour, dear to every right-thinking Chinese heart? Surely it was a legitimate ambition, for China sorely needed Christian statesmen. In the end, therefore, it was a very small thing that decided Dong Sien Sung—a glass button brought him to the firm ground of his resolve, and he battled no longer with the current.

Having at length made up his mind, Dong Sien Sung took more note of his surroundings; he found that they had come nearly to the end of their journey and were about to descend the banks of a real river. He knew that he must now be more alert, for this river had a ferry, and if there was anything his donkey despised and fought shy of, it was a ferry. Dong Sien Sung might be a changed being since he had been educated, but the donkey was still unre-

* This was in the days before the Revolution; Chinese soldiers are much more military now.

generate; in fact, he had never recovered from the cruel handling which he had received in his youth, and had distrusted all mankind ever since. With the assistance of the ferrymen and fifteen or twenty yelling, swearing coolies, the unwilling animal was at length coaxed on board the ferry by dint of being jerked forward while every one kept at a safe distance from his heels.

Once on board, the animal subsided and Dong Sien Sung had a chance to resume his thoughts. Though his mind was now firmly settled, he was not particularly happy; he was tired after his trip, and this last tussle with his donkey had not helped his temper. A pang of homesickness went over him as the city on the river-bank drew nearer, and he recognised familiar objects. Beyond that high gate was his home, which his busy wife kept cosy and neat—so different from that of their heathen neighbours—and this was another thing for which they could thank the foreigners. On the high ridge behind the town rose the walls of the new hospital that was being built; it was to be very sanitary, and there he could at least try some of the latest inventions of medical science. There, too, was the church and, also, the Boys' School; when he went away he would be taking his chil-

dren into a city where there was absolutely no Christian environment. Only a Chinese can know the degradation which that implies; those who have been through the pitch-black midnight can realise the full beauty of the light.

Dong Sien Sung shook himself from such thoughts as being foolish; his decision was made, and his children could now go to boarding-school, where he would pay the tuition himself without help of scholarships. The boat touched the shore, the donkey alighted willingly, and with a brief good-night to the boatman, Dong Sien Sung moved toward home. As he turned into the little street the boys recognised him and ran forward with shouts of glee. At the door of their courtyard stood Dong Si Mu all bows and smiles; when they entered their home together, there was no kissing as there would be in America—that would be highly improper—but there was great good will and many inquiries about each other's welfare.

After several bowls of tea Dong Si Mu, without noticing his weary, gloomy face, started to recount the news to her husband. With great enjoyment she showed him some red hard-boiled eggs sent over that day by the Liu family to announce the glad news that Liu Sien Sung was the father of a son. Dong Sien

Sung listened quietly for a while, for he was a patient man, but at last he remarked,

"Silence in a virtuous woman is golden."

Looking up and catching sight of his expression, his wife decided that silence would also be wisdom in this particular virtuous woman. Nevertheless, she wondered what had come over her husband's usually sunny temper. Dong Sien Sung was a keen man; he decided it would be better to wait to tell his decision to his wife until after he had seen Dr. Scott, then it would be irrevocable, for he had an idea that Dong Si Mu would resist the change with all the determination of which a Chinese woman is capable. Her friends and interests were here, and she was not ambitious to go elsewhere.

The next morning Dong Sien Sung delayed reporting at the hospital until the latest possible moment, for he loved his friend and he hated to disappoint him. He waited so long that the dispensary was full of patients and there was only time for an exchange of greetings, but Dr. Scott fairly beamed when he looked at him. "I wish he would not make it so hard," thought Dong Sien Sung, fretfully. At length all the dressings were done and the prescriptions given out; over the dispensary fell a silence, for the last patient had departed.

"I am so glad to see you back," Dr. Scott exclaimed. "There have been several new operative cases I wish to try, but did not dare to do so without your assistance to help me watch afterwards, for it means several weeks in bed. But best of all, my venerable mother has come to visit us from America, and I want you to be sure to see her."

"It will give me great honour to call upon your most revered parent," Dong Sien Sung said without much enthusiasm. Then, gathering his courage together for his confession, he announced: "Dr. Scott, I have decided to leave Feng Ti Fu."

In a low voice he recounted his reasons. He gave them eloquently and well, but he saw the glad light die in his friend's face as if wiped out by a sponge, and in its place slowly spread a grey, anxious look. For a long time they discussed every phase of the question; Dr. Scott did not blame Dong Sien Sung one whit for wanting to be more independent, yet he felt his prospective loss terribly. It was long past tiffin time when they parted rather sadly.

In spite of his trouble, Dong Sien Sung was mindful of the courtesies, so late on that afternoon, and clad in his best silk coat, he went to call on the foreign lady. With his graceful

carriage, and intelligent, even noble features, Dong Sien Sung was every inch the gentleman, and he made a most favourable impression on the stranger. Through Dr. Scott as interpreter, he asked the proper questions as to her age, and the number of her sons, and complimented her on her "lofty longevity and her great happiness."

After these polite preliminaries the conversation gradually turned to the subject that was in all their minds,—namely Dong Sien Sung's departure. The lady expressed her regret and, after a slight pause, she said:

"Of course we understand the reasons why you would like to go, and in many ways they seem almost unanswerable, but perhaps there is one side of the question which you have not fully considered. My sons and their friends have made a great sacrifice in leaving their homes and friends in America to come to China. Their prospects were very bright, but they did not hesitate because they loved the Chinese and wanted to help them. Do you not think the Chinese in turn should make sacrifices so as to help their own people? I think there is no doubt your influence can count for more here than in some city where you have no one to co-operate with."

Dong Sien Sung assented, and shortly afterwards withdrew, without apparently having changed his mind. As they left the room together he asked Dr. Scott if he might speak to him a moment in his study. As soon as they were seated he turned to his friend. "Dr. Scott," he exclaimed, "the voice of the aged is as the voice of God. I have decided to remain in Feng Ti Fu."

Dong Sien Sung was as good as his word; he slipped back into his old place and fulfilled his duties as efficiently as he had done in the past. Two years flew by; then once more came a tempting offer from a railroad company, and this time there was a promise of fifteen hundred *taels* a year if he would look after the health of the workmen. There was a chance for private practice as well.

The Chinese sages say, "Heaven has heaven spirits, earth has earth spirits, man has man spirit, things have indwelling spirits," and they surely ought to know, for they lived in China in the golden age of wisdom. With so many spirits about, it is no wonder that a spirit of restlessness entered into Dong Sien Sung. "The voice of the aged" was now across the Pacific, too far away to be heard by the keenest ears, so he accepted the offer, and, on one autumn

morning, with a very red-eyed Dong Si Mu and his three children, he left Feng Ti Fu.

The ambitious practitioner prospered beyond his brightest dreams, yet for some reason he did not feel very contented. Perhaps this was partly due to the news of the terrible famine raging around his old home and that the foreigners were working ceaselessly to relieve the want. In March the soft spring wind reminded him that the plum trees in front of the hospital would soon be in bloom; that the pomegranates on the hillside were turning a delicate pink, and a great wave of homesickness went through him. In the end the little breezes wooed him South again. He told his wife that he needed some medical supplies, and leaving a young doctor in charge of his work, he fared forth with a lighter heart than he had known for some months.

His donkey, too, seemed to feel the holiday spirit and was unusually docile, if the word can ever be truthfully applied to the animal. As they travelled, the character of the country changed, and the fields grew more bare, for every blade of grass had been pulled up by the people in their great hunger. The few men whom they met were mere skeletons, with scarcely strength enough to hold out their

hands. Dong Sien Sung gave such relief as he could and was thus so delayed that it was nearly dusk on the third day before he approached the city. He fairly glowed when he thought of the welcome which he would receive.

Suddenly, he recognised one of the Christians in a figure that was walking toward him. But why was his head so bowed and his face clouded with grief? They met and greeted each other with grave courtesy, and after one or more questions on Dong Sien Sung's part, the evangelist exclaimed: "Have you not heard the news? I thought that was the reason that you had come. The poor of Feng Ti Fu all 'eat bitterness' to-night. Dr. Scott is down with typhus fever and he cannot last more than an hour or so! They had all been working like giants over the famine and were worn out. Reports came in that the people were dying like flies in one of the temples where they were harbouring refugees, and Dr. Scott went to see what he could do. He found it worse than he had feared, and he, too, caught the contagion and has been wildly delirious. Liu Sien Sung is ill, too, and no one is having any rest."

The bitterness the poor were eating was

sweet compared to the sorrow and remorse in Dong Sien Sung's heart. Would he never hear his teacher's voice again? He urged his donkey on as that surprised animal had never been urged since he fell into Christian hands, and wonder filled that dumb beast's breast. He was so outraged that he actually responded, and very quickly they were at the compound gate and the donkey was delivered into the care of the gatekeeper. Dong Sien Sung hurried up to the house and was met by the foreign nurse.

She greeted him with great surprise. "But you must not come in," she said, "the house is quarantined; you might take the fever and you must think of your own life and that of your family."

"I have come to help," he replied firmly. "Did Dr. Scott ever think of himself when he could relieve suffering? He had a wife and family when he went to the temple, but that did not keep him from doing his duty," and he walked into the house.

In the sad days of suspense that followed, none was more untiring than Dong Sien Sung. Foreigners and this Chinese doctor vied with each other in loving service; often it would be four o'clock in the afternoon before they could

leave the sick room long enough to snatch a mouthful of breakfast. They were fighting against a treacherous foe, and they simply would not acknowledge themselves defeated. Three times they thought the loved patient had gone, only to see some slight flicker of life return, which encouraged them to work on.

Dong Sien Sung was invaluable; his quiet manner soothed the patient, and it was a pleasure to see how softly he moved about the room, and with what skill he used his shapely hands. He was always on the alert, ready for any emergency, and when not needed would keep himself absolutely in the background. Even when the crisis was past and the foreigners felt that it was safe to relax their watchfulness, they could not persuade Dong Sien Sung to leave the sufferer. It was a mystery when he ate and never did he seem to sleep. He was like the faithful shepherd dog who will not leave his wounded master's side.

At length came a day when Dr. Scott sat bolstered up in a chair, and radiant with joy. Dong Sien Sung sat beside him.

"Dong Sien Sung, you will soon be going back to your work, and I want to try to thank you, but no words can ever express the love and gratitude I bear you. If only I could afford to

keep you near me, I would never let you go. I shall always think of you when I hear the words, 'Faithful unto death'," said the foreigner, turning to his friend with deep feeling.

For once Dong Sien Sung forgot the formal sentiments demanded by Chinese custom, and he replied simply, "Dr. Scott, I cannot leave you. What you have gone through has made the next world seem all important, and advancement appears worthless in comparison to fidelity to duty. When I saw how quietly you spoke that day when we all came to say goodbye, and how sweetly Mrs. Scott bore it, and helped to keep your courage strong with her own, I made up my mind to stay in Feng Ti Fu. I plainly saw that it is true that 'None of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself,' and I felt that I must be in a place that is doing work for other people." Thus Dong Sien Sung turned his back on his ambitions and a competency of fifteen hundred *taels* a year. Do such men deserve the name of rice Christians?

Let no one make the mistake of thinking that life in the Middle Kingdom is monotonous. In the following autumn a little fire started that was spread all over the country to sweep away the monarchy. Like all conflagrations, it did not amount to much at first,

and people smiled when they spoke of the revolution. The foreigners returned as usual to their stations after their vacations, but the fire of the uprising crept nearer; Nanking was besieged, and the American consul telegraphed that the women and children must go to Shanghai. Reluctantly they departed, leaving Dr. Scott at the hospital with Dong Sien Sung as his right hand man.

The uncertainty and suspense that followed would be difficult to describe. Mails were infrequent and the anxious friends in Shanghai could hear nothing, except at long intervals; but the wildest rumours of the happenings of that period did not convey any real idea of the atrocities that actually occurred. At Feng Ti Fu matters were even worse; the country round about was full of bands of robbers, who attacked the unprotected villages while the inhabitants fled into the city for safety. Once Dr. Scott got as far as a three or four hours' trip from home on his way to Nanking for news, when a messenger came after him with the report that brigands had surrounded Feng Ti Fu and had been repulsed in a sharp little encounter, and would he return, as the chief official had been wounded? There was nothing to do but to go back as quickly as possible.

Things grew worse and worse; the helpers and evangelists were forced to take their families to their own province for safety. Thus far no foreigners had been killed; monarchists and revolutionists alike had orders to protect them, but the brigands were looting under no man's orders. Dong Sien Sung came to Dr. Scott again and again, pleading with him to leave. Finally, word came that the trains were no longer to run, and that people who fled along the railroad tracks were murdered every day.

Dong Sien Sung and the city elders went to the foreigner and said, "You must go; staying here you endanger all our lives, for the robbers, knowing you are here, will be tempted all the more to come. They have an idea that every foreigner is rich."

"But," Dr. Scott protested, "I have only a few dollars; they will get nothing."

"That is all the worse! They will not believe you and think you have it hidden, and will torture both you and us."

This was unanswerable, so he turned to Dong Sien Sung: "Of course you will come too, your family in Shanghai will expect it?"

The young doctor shook his head: "My duty is to stay and guard the compound; the

news would quickly spread if there was no one in charge, and it would be pillaged immediately. I speak the dialect and could disguise myself, perhaps, in case of trouble, but you would be unmistakable. But," and his eyes filled with tears, "if anything happens to me you will look after my family?"

Much moved by the request, Dr. Scott promised the brave fellow that he would do so, and they set to work over last plans. One of the hardest things Dr. Scott ever did was to say good-bye to his faithful friend, whom he left standing calm and brave at the gate of the hospital. He caught the last train out to Shanghai and arrived there without accident. Dong Sien Sung's task was anything but easy; he had to guard the compounds, not only against brigands, but from sneak thieves as well, and he scarcely knew rest day or night. Town after town in the neighbourhood was looted and the inhabitants slaughtered, but though as by a miracle, the robbers passed by the hospital buildings. Each day a rumour came that on the morrow the brigands would surely arrive, but several weeks elapsed and still the compound was undisturbed. At last the unhappy country began to settle down once more; a republic was established, and the

American consul gave Dr. Scott permission to return to Feng Ti Fu.

At the hospital he met the same calm friend that he had left, very much worn, it is true, from his many vigils, but loyal to the last. Together they went over the hospital and houses, while Dong Sien Sung told the story of those hard weeks with not one word of boasting. Everything was as it had been left; nothing seemed to have been taken. It was wonderful! Even on the nursery floor lay a little toy horse that had been dropped by one of the babies in the hurry of departure. To hide his emotion Dr. Scott stooped down to pick it up. Fingering it nervously he said, "Dong Sien Sung, we can really never thank you enough, for you have saved our homes at the risk of your own life, and you never counted the cost; what are thanks compared to such an act?"

Dong Sien Sung was equally moved. But in China they find it hard to speak the language of the heart, and to his lips came only the conventional words that cloak so many shades of thought. "It is nothing!"

Then the American did a thing that was contrary to all Oriental etiquette; he held out his hand and his friend clasped it warmly. The

man from the East and the man from the West both knew that they were joined together by a bond that no distance or time could ever sever.

VI

THE INCENSE BURNER

CHANG Dah Mah sat sipping her tea with deep indrawn breaths of content; she nodded her head sagely to give emphasis to the remark she was making. "So I said to the foreign lady, 'Books won't do, Mrs. Scott, books won't do out our way, for the necromancer is the only one that can read, and he's blind'."

Her companion felt that Chang Dah Mah had made the only possible rejoinder under the circumstances, but realising that her friend had more conversational tit-bits in reserve, Wu Sao Tze remained silent.

Chang Dah Mah nibbled daintily at a watermelon seed and continued, "It takes a fast rider and an early start to reach one's destination before a foreigner, for Mrs. Scott replied, 'In that case I think we will have to teach you to read,' and I was so surprised I promised that I would come twice a week to a class. I can't imagine why I did. Whoever heard of a wom-

an's learning to read at my age, and why should they want to take the trouble? It seems strange enough."

Wu Sao Tze shook her head; it all sounded very suspicious. "You had better beware," she said. "There is black magic in those foreign books; I have it on good authority that they seem to teach beautiful doctrines, but those who try to practise them become very queer," and she tapped her forehead suggestively.

Chang Dah Mah was thoughtful for a minute. "I am not sure, but I think those reports are wrong, for our own wise men say, 'Benevolence is man's peaceful abode; righteousness is his straight path.' I sometimes wonder if it would not be well if the Chinese were queer in the same way. I was told when I went to the hospital nearly blind that the foreigners would cut out my eyes to make medicine; instead, they gave me back my sight. Did a Chinese doctor ever make a blind person see? They stick needles into the eye and then one is blind without a shadow of doubt. Now there is Mrs. Scott, the doctor's wife; he is as polite to her as he would be to a man; he actually allows her to go through a door before himself, and he opens it for her most courteously. Do not mention it, but," and

here Chang Dah Mah cast a furtive glance around her to be sure there was no listener to the terrible heresy she was about to utter, "I sometimes wish I had been born a foreign woman myself."

Wu Sao Tze's startled glance made Chang Dah Mah realise that she had gone too far; should Wu Sao Tze report this, it might get her into trouble with her family and neighbours. Here was a case for diplomacy. "I suppose you would not care to attend this class, you might be afraid of the magic? It is a pity, too, for there is so seldom anything new in this part of town, and the foreigners have all sorts of strange toys that they show one. There is a box of music that plays without any one's touching it; it can't be bewitched, for the head official has one at the *yamen,* and he would not use a dangerous thing, for he is a learned man. Then they have clocks that strike, and queer furniture and clothes. They do not use chopsticks, but knives and forks that are most barbarous. It is too bad, but of course you would not feel it safe to come, and I would not even suggest it to you."

The Chinese are often called a peculiar people, but when we come to analyse them they are not very different from ourselves, for

American ladies have been known to gossip over a cup of tea. Curiosity does frequently overcome their prudence, and the temptation of being seen with a woman of better birth has sometimes caused them to accept an invitation, no matter what the consequences.

Although Chang Dah Mah did not know how to read, she knew womankind and was not at all surprised when her friend swallowed her skilfully dangled bait and said that she would join the class. The temptress drew a sigh of relief, for now she felt safer; Wu Sao Tze could not accuse her of being under the foreign influence if she went to their home herself.

The sun set early on those November days, and long shadows from the western mountain were creeping down the narrow street of the little hamlet where Chang Dah Mah lived. The village was nothing but an unkempt suburb of the larger city that lay to the north; a suburb that had once been properous, but, like the inhabitants themselves, it had fallen into adversity.

Chang Dah Mah knew that she must now make her adieux. Having thanked Wu Sao Tze for her boundless hospitality, and having made arrangements for them to go together on

the following day to the foreign lady's class, the two friends separated.

The family of Chang were in no sense parvenues, for they could trace their ancestry back through many generations. In China, where everything old is regarded almost as fetish, good lineage is doubly respected; but, alas, this family had little else but past grandeur to live upon, and their present condition could best be described as "decayed gentility." The Taiping rebellion had swept over that part of the country, leaving devastation in its wake, and the city and the neighbourhood almost a heap of ruins.

The Changs lived in patriarchal fashion, after the manner of China's best families; three generations of sons, their wives, and their children all dwelt under one roof—or what remained of one roof. And such an arangement, as Chang Dah Mah could attest, does not make for peace and a quiet life.

No one need tell her the scene that would greet her when she entered her home; she knew that the children would be quarrelling, the women gossiping, and the men loafing. The condition of their finances was rendered precarious from the fact that the men "could not dig," for manual toil was beneath them. "To

Photograph by D. B. S. Morris, Hwai Yuen, China

THE DIN AND CLANGOR OF THE CROWDED STREET SEEM FAR REMOVED FROM THE QUIET GARDEN WITHIN THE COURTYARD OF THE CHINESE HOME

beg they were ashamed," and they had no learning; so the only practicable means of support was to sell an occasional heirloom to the pawnbroker and gamble away the proceeds. Such a course of conduct did not improve their dispositions.

Chang Dah Mah helped out a little by doing sewing; indeed, it was in this way that she had first met the foreigners. She had gone to them against her family's will, for there was no telling what disaster she might bring upon her precious relatives by associating with "foreign devils," and she had persisted, not from any particular bravery, but had been driven on by the pangs of hunger. The strangers had noticed the state of her poor eyes and had finally prevailed on her to have an operation.

Very few such kindnesses had Chang Dah Mah known since she had come, a child of eight, to live in the house of her father-in-law, and this one had impressed her greatly. Her life had been one round of sordid toil because she was the quietest and most industrious among the women. The only break in the monotony had been her husband's death many years before, which had been quite a pleasurable excitement with its hired mourners, feasting, and confusion; and she could not feel any

depth of sorrow for him, as he had been one of the worst of her tyrants. The marriages of her younger brothers-in-law had indeed been momentous too, but as she had to do the greater part of the work on these occasions, she did not look back upon them with any particular joy. Now, however, the foreign lady had smiled upon her and life had taken on another hue; she had not yet given over all misgivings, but something drew her irresistibly toward the newcomer's home.

It can easily be seen that it was with no rose-coloured dreams of anticipation that Chang Dah Mah turned her face towards her dwelling. On reaching the threshold she drove away a lean pariah dog that had followed her closely; her imagination was too deadened by toil to see in it a likeness to the proverbial wolf whose shadow ever fell across that doorway. As she entered she was greeted by a torrent of curses for the lateness of the hour. "When you know your brothers-in-law need their evening meal, that is the hour you choose for idling with your gossip." The only reason Chang Dah Mah was permitted to pay such visits was the knowledge that she usually got a cup of tea, which left more food for the hungry mouths at home.

The house was almost dark and the flickering oil lamp accentuated the blackness all around. Chang Dah Mah did not need to remove her hat and coat, for she wore the same clothing out of doors as in the house. There was no heat, and the air in the damp rooms was even more clammy than that in the open. With a quick glance around her to see that no one was watching, she went to the corner of the room where she kept her bedding to assure herself that it had remained untouched in her absence, then she turned and started her preparation for the evening meal.

Now Chang Dah Mah had a secret, and around it centred the greatest joy and the greatest fear of her poor thwarted life. Thirty years before as her dissolute husband lay dying he spoke to her in a low whisper when for a brief minute they happened to be alone. Beckoning her to lean over him, so that no one could see what he was doing, from beneath his bedding he slipped a little brass bowl into her hand. Bidding her turn it over, he pointed out on the bottom of it the seal of a dynasty long since passed away. It was one in which many of the most valuable Chinese works of art were made.

The dying man told her that this piece of

brass had belonged to the Changs ever since that period, and that there was a legend that if the incense-burner were sold, a great disaster would fall, not only on the living members of the family, but on the spirits of their ancestors. The only way it could ever be parted with was as a gift of charity, but he warned her against this as a foolish waste; no Chang could ever be brought to give anything away.

"I give it to you, foolish woman," he said, "because I know that my brothers would sell anything to get money for gambling; I can hardly trust you not to sell it for food, but you are the most trustworthy." And with these kindly words he breathed his last.

Chang Dah Mah quickly slipped her new responsibility up her ample sleeve and called the family. Not for many hours did she have a chance in quiet to examine her new possession, as the mourning of her brothers-in-law made up in noise what it lacked in sincerity. At last, one night when the household was deep in slumber, Chang Dah Mah was able to inspect her incense-burner by the dim light of the moon. She longed to see the brass in the daytime, as she had done at first, and when the polished sides had shone like gold to her who never before in her life had owned anything of value.

Chang Dah Mah passed her finger lovingly over her treasure, tracing the seal on the bottom with great care, though she was too ignorant to know a single character, and for nearly an hour she held it and fondled it. Very secretly she dug a hole in the mud floor under the place where she had always kept her bedding; there she hid it by wrapping it in a handkerchief, and by packing the earth carefully over the hole. Daylight had almost come before she had satisfied herself that there was no chance of discovery.

From that time forward Chang Dah Mah's life centred around the bowl; all the affection that had previously been denied expression was lavished on this small object. Before this, she had tried to satisfy her yearning for love by kindnesses to her nephews and nieces, but their parents had been jealous, and they had forced her to desist. Then she had adopted a scrawny kitten, but the family had exclaimed in horror at giving scraps to her pet that she should eat herself, so the animal was taken away. No one could interfere with her affection for the incense-burner as no one knew of its existence.

Very seldom did she have a chance to look at it, for only occasionally did she dare to take it from the hiding place, and then only at

night. Once a year when the family attended the idol procession she would steal away in the crowd and go home to gloat over the brass incense-burner. To keep it as brightly polished as on the day when she received it was ever her ambition, but that, too, had to be done at night. She never went away from the house without the fear tugging at her heart that some one might discover it in her absence, and so it was with a deep sigh of relief that she would return and find it safe. This treasure had never had a rival, and the slight dawning interest Chang Dah Mah had in the foreigners could not be compared to the all-absorbing feeling for it which had crept into the very fibre of her being.

The following morning Chang Dah Mah arose earlier than usual so that she would be sure to get away in good time for the mile walk to the foreigner's compound. How her family would jeer, she thought, if they had known that stupid Chang Dah Mah really imagined that she could learn to read.

She made herself as tidy as she could under the circumstances, and hobbled off stiffly on her poor bound feet. Wu Sao Tze was waiting for her impatiently at the corner of the street, so there was no delay in their departure. The

bright, sparkling, autumn sunshine seemed to get into their blood, and as they walked along, they chatted almost gaily of the wonders they were about to see.

Wu Sao Tze found, to her surprise, that Chang Dah Mah had not exaggerated the marvels of the missionary house. She put an inquisitive nose into every closet and every drawer to assure herself that there was no baby's skeleton concealed, and at last, being fully satisfied that there was no black art hidden in any sequestered nook, she consented to being beguiled with the other women into the reading class. Chang Dah Mah had proudly acted as guide in seeing all the curiosities. As they seated themselves in the woman's guest-room, Wu Sao Tze confided to her friend in a loud whisper that all the people present could hear:

"Well, the foreigners may not use magic, but they are certainly very, very queer."

It was with difficulty that Wu Sao Tze was restrained from talking during the hymn and prayer that followed; in fact, she kept up a running comment on all that was said and done that was very amusing. Before the reading lesson was begun, a short selection from the Bible was read and commented on by the teacher. The verse on that morning was on the

forgiving of one's enemies, and to Wu Sao Tze it seemed an utterly absurd doctrine. In her eagerness and excitement she stood right up, for she felt that such foolish words must be contradicted.

"Hear me! Mrs. Scott," she exclaimed, "such doctrine may be all very well where you come from, but it won't do in China; not for a moment! Why, our enemies would ride right over us; you have to have backbone here, and answer right back when you are reviled, or you would lose face."

All the other women but Chang Dah Mah nodded assent. "She is right and has answered wisely," they murmured; but Chang Dah Mah, thinking of her sisters-in-law and their harsh tongues, felt that there might be something to be said for the new system.

During the next few months Wu Sao Tze and Chang Dah Mah attended the class regularly and, little by little, were able to recognise a few characters. The kindness and sympathy that they invariably received melted their prejudices and won their love, though Wu Sao Tze would often shake her head and say:

"But I can't understand why they take the trouble, unless it is to acquire merit."

In February the famine that had been threatening fell on the city with its horrors. Those were dark days for Chang Dah Mah, for she felt her strength gradually failing, and she began to fear that the time would come when she would no longer be able to walk to the foreigner's home and see her beloved Mrs. Scott. The only money she could make was by the sewing which she did for that lady. Chang Dah Mah would not complain, so it was not suspected how much she needed food, and if she looked a little thin, so did all the women.

For the first time since it had come into her possession, Chang Dah Mah seriously contemplated the necessity of selling the incense-burner. In former famines she had thought of it, but had always decided that she would rather die than lose it, and the idea of being haunted by her ancestors' spirits had deterred her. But now to be separated from Mrs. Scott seemed even worse than ghosts; besides this a little of the Christian doctrine had begun to sink in, and she began to doubt some of the old superstitions. Night after night she would dig up the treasure, thinking that in the morning she would sell it, but as the day began to dawn, old habits and associations regained their pow-

er, and she would return the bowl to its hiding place.

On one warm March afternoon the two friends decided to go and see Mrs. Scott, though it was not the usual time. The notes of a spring bird seemed to assure them that winter and the famine would soon be gone, so they were more cheerful than they had been for many weeks. When they reached the gate of the compound a sad disappointment awaited them, for the foreign doctor was down with typhus fever and the place was in strict quarantine. Mrs. Scott was nursing him and could see no one, so they turned their faces homeward with heavy hearts; several times Chang Dah Mah nearly fell, for she was weighed down with grief and hunger. She thought of the tenderness she had received in the hospital; how gently Dr. Scott had touched her eyes, and now he was dying and she could not tell him of her gratitude.

Chang Dah Mah never knew how she lived through the next few weeks. She received a little sewing from some of the other foreign ladies and that kept her from dying; but they were too absorbed with the illness to know that very often Chang Dah Mah's eyes were so dimmed with tears that she could scarcely see

her stitches, for the reports were not favourable, but rather worse and worse.

Then one day when she crept to the front door they told her that the doctor was better and if she would come back in three days' time that she could see her beloved foreign lady. No words can tell of Chang Dah Mah's joy; she forgot that she was old and weak with hunger and went down the street telling the glad news to the neighbours as she passed.

The minutes dragged on leaden wings until the hour that Mrs. Scott had appointed for Chang Dah Mah's visit, and when she finally stood bowing before the foreigner, she could scarcely speak. She seemed shy and ill at ease and acted as if she had something on her mind. Mrs. Scott, to relieve her embarrassment, talked to her of everything which she thought would interest her, when suddenly in a broken voice Chang Dah Mah said:

"Mrs. Scott, it is such a great happiness to us poor that Dr. Scott is better that I can scarcely talk about it. I hear he took the fever going to see the people who were dying at the temple; now he must not run such risks if I can prevent it, so I have brought him this worthless incense-burner that when he goes into places where there are contagious diseases

he will smell the incense and come to no harm." And putting her hand up the ample sleeve of her Chinese coat, Chang Dah Mah drew forth her treasure, carefully wrapped in a blue handkerchief.

Deeply touched, Mrs. Scott looked searchingly into the woman's eyes and knew that this was a gift that must not be refused, no matter how valuable it might be. But she could never know that Chang Dah Mah had given all that she had.

After this time the days sped rapidly by for Chang Dah Mah, and she was constantly at the home of her new friends, much relieved in spirit by the renunciation she had made. At length came the end of May and it was announced that the next lesson would be the last for the women's reading class, as it was necessary for the foreigners to go away to the mountains.

Once more Chang Dah Mah and Wu Sao Tze made an early start in order not to lose one moment of the precious time of that last day. As they entered the walk leading up to the door, the garden was a blaze of glory with the spring flowers forming a mass of bloom; the bright colours claimed their attention, and they could scarcely leave them to enter the

house. The class was soon assembled and the exercises begun. The chapter read was from the end of Revelation, and Mrs. Scott, who felt that she had recently had a glimpse into the Holy City, talked with her face aglow. She looked down for some answering light in those dull contenances that were just beginning to show some small spark of intelligence, but they looked bewildered and startled. Such profound knowledge was difficult for them to grasp.

Then the teacher's eyes caught those of Chang Dah Mah, who was sitting eagerly forward in her chair so as not to miss one word. It was evident that her long, grey day of sordid existence was ending in a golden sunset shot with the colours of the rainbow. Taught by her love and her great sacrifice, she suddenly exclaimed:

"Oh, Mrs. Scott, it must be very beautiful, even lovelier than the garden, and I want to go! I want to go!" Then, catching sight of her rough, toil-stained hands, and her coarse coat, she felt she would never gain admittance to this wonderful place if she went alone; so looking wistfully up at her friend she continued, "I'll follow you! I'll follow you! if you will only take me to that country!"

VII

HOW BETTY SAVED THE KIDDIES

BETTY put down her story-book and sighed almost from her boots. She wished that she was not only just thirteen; it must be perfectly lovely to be as old as "William the Conqueror" and go into the heat of Southern India to feed poor starving natives. Of course, it wasn't the William the Conqueror famous in history whom she was envying, but Rudyard Kipling's "William—the girl," who insisted on spending a summer helping her brother to rescue Indian famine sufferers.

"I suppose I'm really not pretty enough to be a heroine," Betty thought. "A girl with red hair and a good many freckles wouldn't do at all; still Kipling doesn't make William very beautiful, so if I were a bit older I might have a chance. And Elizabeth Kenneth McKenzie would read awfully well—it's the only beautiful thing about me."

Betty looked wistfully out of the window on the narrow grass plot surrounded by

flower beds in which a few late chrysanthemums still bloomed; beyond these the high compound walls shut her in. On the whole, it was a very small playground and it did not tempt her now. Over the walls came the usual street noises of a crowded Chinese city; the call of the street vender, the shrill scolding of women quarrelling, the barking of pariah dogs, even the grunts of pigs, and at the gate, the tap of a beggar's stick, and his whining voice asking for alms. The air was oppressive with sickening odours, for in China, as a visitor once wisely remarked, "There are seventy-five smells one can identify and twenty-five unknown ones." It would take walls several leagues high to keep these odours from penetrating.

Betty did not notice the noises or the smells; like Brer Fox, who had been "born and bred in a brier patch," she had always lived within sight and sound of these very streets.

This year was different, however. All summer long the rain had fallen, and the rivers and canals had risen and flooded the country as far as eye could see. When Betty had come back from the summer in the mountains and had steamed up the river in a launch, instead of green fields and bright harvests the country

was one vast lake. The city, too, had changed; around its walls thousands of straw huts had been built. These were just long enough for a man to lie in, but not tall enough to make it possible for him to stand erect. And in these huts lived one hundred thousand men, women, and children.

Betty was never allowed at any season to go out alone in the crowded streets, but this winter she did not want to go even with her father, as there were hungry people on every hand, begging for bread. She could not bear to pass them by without giving them a few *cash,* and to do so might cost the lives of all the foreigners; for in a few minutes a mob of starving people would collect and demand food; so all the giving had to be done outside the walls at famine relief camps.

Life seemed very dull and very sad, indeed, to Betty on this dark November afternoon. "I know I should feel better if I could only do something for them," she repeated over and over. "Then I would climb on a mule and go out to the relief work and give out meal tickets all day, and I wouldn't mind their crying so, because I would be doing something."

At that moment she heard a knock at the door of the gate-house and saw the old gate-

keeper in his funny padded coat go forward to open the door. He stood making deep bows of welcome to Betty's mother. No matter how often in the day she came in, Chinese politeness called for a certain amount of ceremony every time. Betty was overjoyed to see her, but as her mother came nearer she noticed with a pang how tired she looked. She sank into a chair with a sigh, while Betty stuffed a cushion behind her back, took off her hat, and ran into the kitchen for a cup of tea. Betty had not lived so long in China without finding out the cheering qualities of tea.

"Well, dearie, what have you been doing?" her mother asked between refreshing sips.

"Oh, nothing, only reading," Betty answered. "But where in the world have you been all this time? It's been terribly lonesome, with the boys at the Steads and you and father out."

"I have been visiting the poor women in the neighbourhood to find the really needy cases; but the trouble is that they are all so needy it's hard to choose," and the tired lines returned to her face as she spoke. "There are at least fifteen babies right around us who will starve to death unless we feed them, and I really do

not see how I can do one solitary thing more than I am doing."

Betty's heart went thump; here was her chance, but she must keep quiet and not speak hastily or she might lose it. After thinking a moment, she said with an air of grown-up importance which she unconsciously used when talking to older people, "Oh, mother, just let me feed those babies!"

"You, Betty!" her mother exclaimed.

"Yes, me—your daughter, Elizabeth Kenneth McKenzie—the name ought to help. I can do it morning and evening; you can show me how the first time and then I will do it by my lonesome."

"But, Betty, the babies are so dirty; I'm sure you will have all sorts of diseases. I simply can't have my little daughter touch them."

"Well, mother, I don't see what's the use of being the daughter of a foreign missionary if you can't keep babies from starving. I might as well be brought up in style in America; anyhow, with father spending all his days among the famine fever patients, and you in the people's houses, if we are going to catch things and die, we will anyway."

Her mother knew that she spoke the truth, but she could not help a sigh. She did not

doubt Betty's powers, for she had trained her herself and had not left her to servants. With all her teaching she had kept Betty a healthy, romping girl, inducing her only to curb the quick temper that is supposed to be the concomitant of red hair, and rejoicing always in her daughter's warm heart.

Mrs. McKenzie was deep in thought, but at last she said, "We will have to ask father, but I'm sure he will consent; we simply cannot let any human beings starve whom we can save!" Then she let her usual reserve go, for she was very sad and tired. "I wonder all the time how it will end. Here is your father working himself to death, and every morning when I say good-bye to him, I ask myself, will he come back to-night? If the Chinese were not the most patient people in the world, they would rise up and demand food of those in authority, and would wreck everything until they were given rice. There is no telling where they would stop."

Betty looked at her mother in surprise, for she was always so bright and cheerful. If she gave way, things must be black indeed. However, she had won her victory, for she knew her father well enough to realise that he would

not place obstacles in her way—as her brothers often said, "What mother says goes."

Soon all was arranged; the women from the immediate neighbourhood whom Mrs. McKenzie had seen were to be allowed to bring their babies to the compound and the next morning was set for their first visit. The supply of condensed milk sent on the relief ship from America was brought out, as there would not be enough cow's milk to go around.

Betty arose with the roosters; there were no larks in that city to rise with, but there was plenty of poultry. Prompt as she was, she could not out-distance the first eager woman who, with the Chinese idea of time, arrived at the earliest peep of the sun. Betty kept her waiting in the gate-house until she was entirely ready and need not be flurried; then with a nod from her, Lao Wong let all the women in.

They were a motley and miserable crowd, and reminded Betty of the creatures of the highways and byways, or the scarecrows which she had seen in America. Each pitiful figure had a scrawny, wizened baby in her arms or led one by the hand; and all were wailing with hunger. Betty wanted to sit right down and cry too, but she knew that would never do, for she was there to stop their crying and not to

add her voice to theirs. In a very business-like way she and her mother went to work; some they fed from a bottle, some from a spoon, and one little mite from a medicine dropper. It was slow work, but Betty said afterwards that she was very glad she had nursed her dolls herself through the measles and scarlet fever, instead of leaving them to trained nurses, for now she knew how to handle real babies.

They could not feed the children and leave the mothers looking like famished dogs, so they gave them breakfast also. One poor woman looked up with gratitude in her eyes and said, "You are so good; yesterday my husband told me that to-morrow I would have to sell my baby or throw it away." Making a gesture with her arms she added happily, "But I can keep her now," and she hugged the baby close. It was nearly eleven when the last woman made her last deep bow and said her final, "You are two good, gracious ladies," and left the now empty and quiet compound.

"I feel as if I ought to soak in disinfectants for the rest of the day," laughed Betty. "But this has shortened the hours so that I have no time. We will begin again at four."

Every morning and evening throughout the winter Betty fed her babies, and little by little

she had the joy of seeing their wizened faces change and brighten, and have them hold out chubby arms to her instead of the claw-like hands which had so distressed her at first. The mothers, too, seemed to love her, and began to soften their loud tones and straighten out their rough hair and wash their dirty garments.

When June came Betty was a tired and very white-faced little girl, but I doubt if any girl in the whole Celestial Empire was as happy as she. For the fields were green with a harvest that promised plenty for every one for the coming year; and on Sunday afternoon, fifteen bright-faced Chinese women who held fifteen plump, smiling babies in their arms, walked into Mrs. McKenzie's class.

"We have come to hear about the God that loves little children," the oldest woman said.

VIII

A GONE GOOSE

THROUGHOUT the long days of July and August the low plains of Central China lie steaming in the sun; the humidity is terribly high and the effect on the human constitution can be compared only to a vapour bath that never ceases day or night. Then, when the enervated foreigner feels ready to give up the fight for such a weary existence, the climate suddenly changes and there follows week after week of the most glorious autumn weather to be found the wide world over.

It was seven of the clock on one of these matchless mornings, and Anne Waring, latest and rawest recruit to the staff of an inland station, was supposed to be hurrying with her dressing. The glimpses of Chinese life, which she caught from her window through the plum trees and over the high compound wall, sadly hindered the process. The novelty of seeing so many purely domestic rites—fit only for the eyes of one's nearest and dearest—performed

in doorways and streets still fascinated her and held her spellbound. She found herself whispering the words of the nonsense rhyme, "Now really, John, what next?" Here a man was eating a bowl of rice with noisy enjoyment, handling the chopsticks with a deftness that was a fine art; near him stood a woman scrubbing some garments in a muddy pool; and next to her, her best-hated neighbour was washing her face and hands in the same muddy water.

This was the "simple life" indeed; Charles Wagner should have come to China if he had wanted to learn its a, b, c's. A voice in the hall, and a fragrant whiff of coffee brought the dreamer back to herself, and hastily fastening the last button and giving an extra pat to her rebellious curls, she ran down the stairs. The dining-room was a pleasant sight in the morning sunlight, with its blue Soochow rug, a few well-chosen pictures and the gleaming white cloth with a bowl full of late roses in the centre of the table. It was homelike and simple too, but—oh, the contrast between this simplicity and that of the Chinese street!

Behind the coffee urn sat Miss Matilda Kellogg, known all over the Empire as "Miss Matilda," a quiet, well-poised little lady, with many virtues, no vices, and a great amount of

dignity, as became one who had lived in the East for twenty-five years, and was an authority on matters of Chinese etiquette. Although Miss Matilda had no vices, she had one great weakness, which she secretly regarded almost as a sin; that was her fondness for her old silver. It was the only thing of value she had brought from America with her, for she was the last of her family, and the plate had belonged to a Kellogg for nearly one hundred years. Whenever the verse was read aloud commanding us to set our affections on things above, and the danger of thieves and rust in this world below, Miss Matilda thought of her silver with a pang of conscience, and knew that she had not yet been made perfect.

Anne Waring seated herself at the table with a brief, "Good morning." She then proceeded to help herself freely to strawberry jam from the jar standing temptingly near her, and which, like the delectable sweets in *Alice in Wonderland,* seemed to say, "Eat me." She spread her crisp, buttered toast very thickly, for she felt that she needed all the sugar and spice she could find to make bearable a morning spent memorizing Chinese radicals.

"What makes Following the Procession pant

as if he had been running a race? It isn't so far from the kitchen," she finally inquired.

"Who? What? Where?" gasped Miss Matilla bewildered.

"Why, the new table boy, of course. I call him Following the Procession. Dr. Scott assures me that it is a free translation of his name, and I cannot yet pronounce his Chinese one."

Miss Matilda frowned a little; she did not like to have the slightest fun poked at anything belonging to her beloved Chinese, but her sense of humour soon conquered, and she laughingly replied, "A most appropriate name; he is just the type that would follow a procession to the bitter end, regardless of anything else. In fact, when I first saw him he was doing that very thing; it was the June idol festival, and he was one of the most engrossed of a crowd of boys who were following in the wake of the Taoist priests as they marched from the temple. The reason he breathes so hard when he waits on the table is that he is afraid of us and our strange foreign ways; he does not know but that at any moment some of the orders we give him may bewitch him."

"All I can say is we will have to have him oxygenated if he keeps it up much longer; he is

fairly red in the face and blowing like a porpoise." After this elegant expression Anne Waring turned her attention to her breakfast.

She was startled out of a reverie by Miss Matilda, "Sneak thieves came in last night and stole some clothes off the line; I think we will have to buy a goose."

Anne repressed a flippant desire to say, "What is the use of buying a goose when we already have Following the Procession?" She also wondered what stealing of clothes had to do with buying a goose. Her theory was that in a new country it was better to "Stop! Look! Listen!" rather than to ask too many questions, so she kept her curiosity to herself and answered.

"What a lark! I suppose we'll have it for Christmas! A goose at Christmas seems so like Dickens and Washington Irving, and so charmingly Mid-Victorian." The last word she added with a wicked little twinkle.

Miss Matilda shuddered at the "Mid-Victorian." This latest comer to the station was very modern and iconoclastic, she thought, but she let it pass.

"Why, I do not want to eat the goose," she explained. "The Chinese use geese instead of watch-dogs, because they cackle at the slight-

est noise, and I thought we might try one. We are very unprotected here at the edge of the city; they say that there are many brigands about this year, as the winter promises to be a hard one. The cook and the table boy go home at night, and the gatekeeper sleeps like the dead, so he is no help."

"I think it is a perfectly splendid idea; how clever you are to think of it, and to use the Chinese methods! Only a person who was steeped in Chinese customs would have dreamed of such a thing."

Pleased with Anne's praise, Miss Matilda forgave the "Mid-Victorian" thrust on the spot. "She really does appreciate age and experience," she thought.

At noon when this latest and rawest recruit entered the compound gate, she realised that Miss Matilda, for all her love of things Chinese, still trailed clouds of her early New England training behind her. For before Anne's astonished eyes appeared the goose, and surely no Oriental ever accomplished a purpose as quickly as her friend had acquired that bird. She stood still at the sight that greeted her. Three of the Scott children were chasing the goose, which was half running, half flying, down the garden walk. Before she could in-

terfere, the scene suddenly changed; the goose turned, and, with loud hisses and out-stretched neck, reversed the order of procedure. Quickly the shouts of glee died away and the children rushed in their terror for the protection of the house.

All day long the thought of her introduction to the goose kept Anne amused and cheerful, and when in the middle of her lesson she remembered the sudden flight of the children she laughed aloud with no apparent cause. The surprise of her dignified Confucian teacher was great, although his passive Oriental features did not allow him to show his feelings. Returning to his home, however, he remarked on the subject to his wife, describing the light and frivolous manner of this foreign lady, and saying this custom of these foreigners was not good; their women should not remain single, but should marry and learn the respect that was due to the "lords of creation"; of course, he did not use that exact expression, but that was what he meant.

In the evening Anne retired early with a sense of security unknown before since she had arrived to find that Miss Matilda and she were to live alone in this strange city, so far from beefsteaks, hairpins, electric lights, and many

thousand other necessities of modern civilisation. Was not the goose there to protect them, and had it not shown that it could make a noise? She had scarcely fallen off into her first sweet slumber when she was aroused by a sudden din in the compound directly below her room; at first she was too sleepy to know what was happening; then she realised that it was their valiant protector, the goose. Could it be frightening away a burglar already? She flew to the window to behold the gatekeeper's sturdy figure trudging slowly with its accustomed calm toward the gate-house. Of course, so soon the goose could not be expected to know the difference between friend and foe, but already it had proved itself worthy and vigilant. There were other slight alarms before she crossed the borderland, but when she finally slept, she slept soundly.

On the next morning the two friends congratulated each other on their latest acquisition; their work went better all day for the feeling of safety they had about the coming night. That evening was a repetition of the former one; again the gatekeeper came late, and again the goose awoke the sleeping Anne. This time, however, it took her longer to woo coy slumber, but at length it came, but not

to linger, alas, for Anne! In the wee small hours she was again disturbed by a commotion in the compound. It was very dark and cold and she hesitated to stir; then she heard stealthy footsteps on the stair and she tried to reassure herself by thinking it was the loud beating of her heart; but, no, they were coming nearer, they were at her door. She would have to scream! She heard Miss Matilda open the long French window in her room and step out on her porch and then a loud pistol shot. Another report followed. Was Miss Matilda killed, or was she doing the shooting? She must get up and see, but her feet felt like lead and her mouth was so dry she could not call. Then, to her infinite relief, she heard Miss Matilda's voice in the hall, talking apparently to the owner of the footsteps, so her courage revived and she opened the door.

"What has happened, and how many robbers did you kill?" she cried.

Before her stood Miss Matilda and Chang Dah Mah, the *amah,* looking very sheepish.

"It is all right, Chang Dah Mah has no clock, and though it is still dark, she thought it was time to get up, so she began to dress. The goose probably heard her and started to

cackle, so I went out on the balcony and fired off my pistol, just to let any would-be burglars know that we were prepared."

"What time is it?" asked poor Anne weakly.

"Just two o'clock, and we must be off to bed or we will be all worn out to-morrow." With these sensible words Miss Matilda disappeared.

Anne found it hard to catch even a nap after this; she would nearly drop off, when she would fancy that she heard a cackle and start up wide awake.

The history of that night was repeated nearly every night thereafter. None passed without two alarms, and Anne would have hated to say how many blank cartridges were fired towards the mountain from whence brigands were supposed to come, for Miss Matilda would not have acknowledged half of them. Chang Dah Mah could never learn the proper hour to dress, and often she would be heard creeping down the stairs. Anne gradually grew braver and, after many false alarms had given her confidence, would join in the midnight march to the balcony, searching dark corners as valiantly as Miss Matilda, until she took so many bad colds that the doctor finally ordered her to stay in bed. Their rest was so disturbed that she was heard to exclaim, when

at a safe distance from Miss Matilda's genteel ear,

"I'd like to wring that fowl's neck."

One night the climax came; they were aroused five different times; five different times was the pistol fired off towards the mountain. Anne thought that really "Following the Procession" had some grounds for his fears, and that the foreigners and their whole compound were bewitched. The following night they slept the sleep of exhaustion; the gatekeeper, the *amah,* Miss Matilda, Anne Waring, and last and strangest of all the goose—none of them stirred. In the morning Anne announced, when Miss Matilda had fairly to shake her to make her wake up,

"What a blissful night! I have had my first good sleep in weeks!"

"And well you may," exclaimed Miss Matilda, and Anne saw with surprise that her eyes were suspiciously red, "for thieves broke in and stole all of my precious silver."

Anne's face was a study; sorrow for Miss Matilda's loss, dismay that their many vigils had been in vain and, above all, a wild desire to burst into peals of laughter, gave her a most bewildered expression. But this was no time for unseemly mirth, and choking back the

laugh, she set herself to work to comfort Miss Matilda.

The servants one by one were interviewed, and all protested the greatest innocence, including "Following the Procession," and the water-coolie. No trace could be found of the thief or of the missing silver. The station decided to take the matter up; there had been numerous other thefts recently which had been allowed to pass because they disliked to appeal to the *Yamen*. The thieves were becoming dangerous, however, and there seemed need of a more drastic policy. In a mission station, the work of the doctor is best understood and appreciated by the Chinese, who give him the title of the "Great Man"; so with one consent Dr. Scott was chosen as ambassador to the official. He sent his large red calling card an hour or two before him, announcing his intention of visiting the magistrate, and followed it in due time.

He was carried by coolies in the best sedan chair that the station could boast, and which was gay with tassels and curtains. On approaching his destination, he was surprised at being met by an escort of soldiers with banners flying, and when he reached the gates they flew open for him without the usual de-

lay. On inquiry, he found that a famous general was visiting the official; some of his soldiers and officers had been treated in the doctor's hospital, and the general was desirous of showing his gratitude. This circumstance made Dr. Scott's visit seem all the more hopeful.

It took a good two hours to make all the bows, drink all the tea, and ask all the questions demanded by Chinese etiquette. Then they could come down to earth, and Dr. Scott make known his errand. The officials were all politeness and distress that this should occur in their unworthy town. It would be a simple matter to catch the thieves; they would order all the policemen in town arrested and have them beheaded, and the silver would perforce immediately be returned. Dr. Scott knew enough of Chinese standards of justice to realise that they would do just as they had said. He replied exactly as you or I would have done in the same circumstances, and retired a crestfallen man to report to Miss Matilda.

That is the reason that Miss Matilda's old family plate has given way to the best silver-plated, and that with it a most delicious Christmas goose was eaten. Fortunately, geese know no such nice distinctions, and taste

equally well from any kind of fork, though Miss Matilda declares that to get their best flavour, one must use a pair of the finest ebony chop-sticks. Anne realised that she ought not to venture an opinion until she had been in China at least fifteen years, but she knows that she never ate a goose with greater relish. Thus departed the goose, "Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung," and Following the Procession picked the bones.

IX

THE DEVIOUS WAYS OF A HOUSE-BOAT

HELEN BRETT was a slave to time and she knew it. She had known it for five years, and because of this knowledge her nerves had begun to give way. She confessed to the doctor that the sight of a clock made her faint, and when she heard one strike she wanted to stop her ears and run. Of course she realised that almost all the people that she knew were in the same bondage, but as they were unconscious slaves, it did not hurt them, she reasoned.

The habit began while she was preparing for college. In order to enter Smith when she had planned, it was necessary to use every minute, and so she had started life with a watch in her hand. Helen meant to succeed and she had succeeded, and not until she had been a professor in one of the leading women's colleges for two or three years did it begin to dawn upon her that she hated to be efficient; that she loathed a schedule, and that a life or-

dered like a railroad time-table was crushing her spirit and ruining her disposition.

At the pyschological moment came her sabbatical year and a letter from Matilda Kellogg asking Helen to spend her leave of absence in China. At the first paragraph Helen shook her head emphatically; Matilda must certainly have lost all that practical common sense for which she was famous when they had been chums at college, or she would never suggest such a weird idea. But when she read further, she paused, for the letter ran:

"If you decide to come, there is one thing I must warn you about, for I do not want to get you here under false pretences. The Chinese have absolutely no idea of time; all hours of the day seem equally good to them, and as far as they are concerned, the sun and moon stand still. I must also admit that we foreigners grow careless after a vain effort to try to hustle them on our first arrival, and we soon grow almost as tardy in our habits as they are. Knowing that to you punctuality is the greatest human virtue, I make this confession; nevertheless I hope you will come."

On that very evening Helen tore up her carefully prepared itinerary for a tour of Italy, wherein the arrival and departure of

trains was methodically noted, and cabled Matilda Kellogg, "Coming on the next steamer."

On stepping off the launch at Shanghai, the first remark Helen made was, "Matilda, I have come to China to drift, and I want to do the very most unpunctual thing you can think of."

Matilda wiped a tear away—this seeing her first home friend for seven years was homesick work—but in a minute she was laughing at Helen's characteristic, business-like directness. "If you want to drift, what could be better than the house-boat trip to my station which I am planning for you? A house-boat, next to my cook, is the most unpunctual thing in the world."

Helen found that a house-boat trip required much preparation and was not to be undertaken lightly and unadvisedly. Nearly a week went by before all the necessary purchases for a winter in the interior of China could be made. When they finally started for the river steamer that was to take them to the mouth of the Grand Canal, their rickshas were heaped to the gunwales with packages, while the heavy freight went on in carts in front of them. They made quite an imposing procession.

"I suppose to-morrow evening we will be

on our own little boat," said Helen gaily as they paced back and forth on the broad decks of the steamer. "We get to Ching Kiang about noon, do we not?"

Matilda laughed. "My dear tenderfoot, do you think we are in Chicago? Why it will take at least a day to negotiate for the house-boat, then there is all the freight and coal for the winter to get on board. Let me see? This is Tuesday; we will be lucky if we get off by Friday."

On Saturday morning Matilda Kellogg stated at breakfast that she thought that they would be able to sail by ten o'clock. The house-boat was all ready except for their personal belongings and the coolies were to come at nine o'clock.

At a quarter after nine Helen descended the stairs all dressed and ready and seated herself on the trunks standing strapped and waiting in the hall, "I am fifteen minutes late. I did it on purpose. I really think I am beginning to understand their ways. I will just stay here, for they can't be long now and they say it is always wise to keep one's eyes on one's things," she murmured to herself.

By eleven o'clock her wait had begun to grow irksome; so Helen ascended the stairs to

her room to see what Matilda was doing. She found her friend contentedly rocking back and forth and discussing some interesting mission problems with her hostess.

"Why, Matilda, are you not ready? It is a quarter after eleven!" she exclaimed reproachfully.

"Oh, is it; have the coolies come?" Miss Matilda asked absent-mindedly.

"No," replied the hostess, "Jack couldn't get the ones we usually employ, so he has gone to another *hong*. It is quite a distance across the canal, and they will probably be eating. Then they will have to smoke a pipe or two, so you might as well make up your minds to stay to tiffin." It seemed the only thing to be done, so they consented.

By two o'clock there was a noisy crowd of coolies in the compound, and Miss Matilda sent down word to the kitchen to her cook and *amah* that she was ready to start. But the cook was not to be found; the last seen of him was when he had said he was going out on "the street" to make some purchases for the trip. After being all summer in the mountains with Miss Matilda, his wardrobe he felt had need of replenishment. There was nothing to do but wait, for

they could not leave without him and there was no way in which he could follow.

So the afternoon slipped on until half past four when Lao Liu, the cook, reappeared, very much pleased with himself and the rakish derby hat which he had bought. As a sop to Cerberus, he presented a live chicken to Miss Matilda, and listened with a placid smile to the scolding that she administered, for she was not to be placated by the fowl.

All thought of leaving that day had to be abandoned, and as the next day was Sunday, they were forced to put off their departure until Monday morning. On Saturday night as they were about to retire, Helen unfastened her wrist-watch with a dramatic gesture and handed it to Miss Matilda. "Take it," she said, "and bury it in your deepest trunk, for I can easily see I will never need it here."

Strange as it may seem, for China is the land of contradictions, at half past eight on Monday morning the luggage was ready, the coolies collected at the gate, and the cook and *amah,* their arms full of bundles, awaited the word of departure. The shock was almost greater than Helen could bear, and for the first time in nearly ten years she herself was half an hour late.

Her one consolation was that the cure was beginning to work.

As they closed the compound gate and plunged down the narrow, winding street, Helen's heart failed as it had not done since she had sighted the low, mud shores of China. Heretofore she had travelled in chairs or rickshas and the poverty and dirt had not pressed so close upon her; but now she was to see things as they were with a vengeance, and she was not sure that she was going to like it. It was picturesque enough as far as the buildings were concerned. The street was so narrow that only a ribbon-like strip of blue sky showed above, and the curved roofs, carved doorways, and long pendant signs covered with characters would rejoice an artist's soul. Helen was about to exclaim with pleasure at the sight, when her eyes were suddenly called back to earth, for she stumbled, and nearly fell headlong over a black pig that was lying sprawled directly across her path.

"This is no place for star gazing," chided her friend. "You must look where you are going or you will land in a mud-hole, and then it would take more than Sapolio or Dutch Cleanser to make you respectable."

Helen could hardly repress her disgust, but

if Matilda Kellogg, the fastidious, had stood it for so many years, she at least would be game enough to tolerate it for one.

"I do not want to be critical, but it seems to me that your coolies and all those others," pointing to a group down the street, "are rather sketchily clad for weather and decency."

"Now, Helen," laughed Miss Matilda, "you didn't expect Fifth Avenue when you came to China, did you? You'll soon get used to such little things. I never notice it now, though I confess to a turn or two at first. Here, wait a minute; I am going to stop and buy some turkey red to make some curtains for the house-boat. If we cannot be elegant, we may as well be cosy."

Laughing and chatting in this manner, they came down to the bank of the canal. Helen in truth felt a little like whistling to keep up her courage; this being cut off from one's kind and going alone into a not too friendly country, she found was a new and far from pleasing sensation.

At this point the canal was very wide, and on every hand as far as the eye could see, were myriads of boats of every size, from the large, stately junk of the official to the tiny, clumsy boat of the beggar.

"Why, all the world's a boat!" exclaimed Helen. "But where is ours and how can we possibly reach it?"

"Way out there! We shall have to cross from boat to boat with narrow boards as gangways stretched across. It really is a little dangerous," Miss Matilda added anxiously, "for they do sometimes go over, and the current just here is swift."

"Let's ask Lao Liu to burn an incense stick for us while we are crossing," laughed Helen.

Miss Matilda did not reply to this sally as Helen had expected, but still wore an anxious frown. She had seen a man drown at this spot on her last trip, and it was no laughing matter; but she kept the knowledge of this accident to herself.

By this time everybody in the vicinity who had nothing to do, and also many who had been busy, began to collect around them. In China no one is in such a hurry that he cannot stop, look, and listen whenever any new thing appears, and nothing is a greater treat than the sight of a foreigner. Therefore, the ladies felt it better to start at once on their perilous trip. Sometimes the board would be as steady as a church; sometimes it would nearly turn and they would have to jump to make it, and some-

times there would be no board at all. The onlookers gave them plenty of good advice which was Greek to Helen, but she got on exactly as well without it. After a great amount of exertion they reached their haven of refuge and hastened into the tiny cabin to rest.

"I never saw so many boats nor so many people in my life. There must be a good deal of disease among them, isn't there?" asked Helen.

"There is plenty of contagious disease everywhere in China, and if you are going to worry about that you might as well go right home, for there is no way of avoiding exposure. That boat over there, for instance, has smallpox in it. I went the other way on purpose, but it was hardly worth while, for probably there was some one ill in nearly every one we crossed."

"Well," said Helen, "now at length we are off. I wonder what time it is, and how far we will get to-day," and she looked down to the place where her wrist-watch used to be.

"Not so fast, not so fast," replied Miss Matilda. "If there is not a favourable wind, and the sailors are not disposed, we may not go at all to-day; besides which the sail has to be raised, the incense burned, the firecrackers set off, the drum sounded, and, perhaps, a chicken

sacrificed before we can start. All the evil spirits must be propitiated, or our voyage may end in disaster."

"And you a foreign missionary!" gasped her friend. "If there is no wind, why did we leave a perfectly good house thus early in the morning and hurry down amidst all this disease, and these eyes?" She added this as she looked up and discovered curious eyes in every window.

"My dear, I do not own this boat, and so cannot prevent it; if I tried we would probably be mobbed. Anyway, you cannot change people's superstitions by force, but only by conviction. As for your other question, the wind is a good one for all I know to the contrary, and even if it is not, it may change at any moment; and in this country if you ever want to get anywhere you must be on the spot."

"You are right as always, and I am a very, very tender-foot," smiled Helen; "I wanted to drift, and drifting let it be."

Having given orders to sail as soon as possible, Miss Matilda started to do the honours of their new home.

"This first cubby hole you enter on leaving the bow is the kitchen where Lao Liu holds

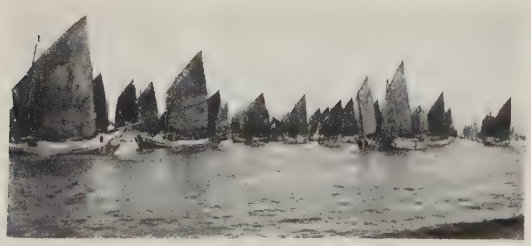
sway, although he does almost all the cooking on deck over the charcoal brazier. Those chickens you see are alive and we are to subsist on them throughout the trip. Do you wonder that they look pensive? Chinese chickens are likely to look that way for some reason."

"Do you always travel with Lao Liu like a sort of human dress suitcase?" asked Helen.

"Always, he looks after our fifty odd parcels and does the bargaining and the cooking as well, for I cannot eat the native food. I pay him three dollars a month and he supplies his own meals. He is supposed to make a pretty good thing of it, and is a dandy as well. Just notice the rakish angle of that derby hat that we waited all Saturday afternoon for him to buy."

In the cabin the *amah* had almost settled their belongings. Helen now began to see the necessity for all the pile of luggage. She found that Miss Matilda had to supply everything: camp cots, bedding, knives, forks, plates, tablecloths, towels, wash-basins, and many other necessities. No wonder Lao Liu was an essential. The cabin was to be their bedroom, living- and dining-room, while next

IN CHINA NO ONE IS IN SUCH A HURRY THAT HE CANNOT STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN WHENEVER ANY NEW THING APPEARS



A FLEET OF HOUSE-BOATS UNDER WAY

it was a tiny closet which they could use as a dressing-room.

"Just beyond that thin board partition are the quarters of the boatman's family," explained Miss Matilda, as they investigated this apartment. "There are many cracks and holes in the boards, so I have hung up those curtains to keep off the all-pervading eye that is ever with us in the Orient."

Having thoroughly investigated their quarters, they unpacked the remainder of their belongings and settled themselves down in the living-room.

"As I gave you my watch, and said to myself that time was nothing to me, I suppose it is inconsistent to state that certain inner symptoms make me feel that tiffin should be prepared," Helen remarked an hour or two later.

Miss Matilda, who had no quarrel with time, pulled out her watch and exclaimed, "Why, it is a quarter after two, and Lao Liu has not begun to get ready. No wonder you are hungry!" And she hurried out on deck to get things started.

At three they sat down to a nicely cooked meal, and as they did so the beating of a drum and the explosion of firecrackers told them

that they were finally under way. The breeze caught the sail, the water rippled against the prow, and they went along merrily for four or five *li*.

"If this alarming speed keeps up I have faith to believe that we will get to Feng Ti Fu a week or two before it is time for me to turn my face toward home," said Helen laughingly.

The words were scarcely spoken, when there was a grating sound; then the boat came to such a sudden stop that they were almost thrown to the floor. Tremendous excitement and shouting ensued with a rushing about the deck. When the confusion had subsided a little they found that they had run on a sand-bar and it took nearly an hour to get them off. Then, after a good deal of discussion, the master of the boat decided to come to anchor for the night. There was a curve in the canal directly in front of them, and if they went on the wind would be dead ahead; and besides, a village was at hand which would make a protection through the hours of darkness. Helen protested mildly that such dillydallying was worse than a schedule, but Miss Matilda agreed with the boatmen. She knew more of the dangers of pirates and bandits than did Helen, and did not care to be caught by dark-

ness between two villages where they would be alone against marauders.

Very early that evening they retired to bed, for a chill had fallen with sunset that made the thought of warm blankets welcome. It took some time to make everything snug and safe, for there were no locks on the doors and they had to be secured by ropes. When Helen gathered from a chance remark of Matilda's that these precautions were rather needless as pirates usually captured the whole boat and carried it off, getting rid of the passengers in various ways, a distinct shiver went down her spine. She did not make any inquiries about what these ways were, thinking that where ignorance was bad enough, knowledge would be even worse. Her great comfort was that her friend had taken the trip many times and was still alive to be frightened.

All through the time of her preparations she was disturbed by the quarrelling of the boat people. The wife of one of the boatmen had a red hot temper and her voice was seldom still, but in the quiet of evening it seemed to echo and re-echo through the night. Miss Matilda was evidently used to this sort of lullaby and soon fell asleep. Not so Helen; she twisted and turned and put her hands

up over her ears without much success until the voice stopped. She was just falling into her first sweet doze when she was startled awake by the sound of scratching on the door at her head. She raised herself and peered out into the darkness; that surely was the scrape of burglars' tools. She waited quietly at first, but the noise kept furtively on and she felt in a moment that she must scream.

"Matilda! Matilda! what is that?" she said in a hoarse whisper.

"What is what?" came the sleepy answer.

"That scraping sound; do you not hear it?"

Then there was a scream and Matilda bounded from her bed. "Helen, it is a rat; it ran right over me."

The boat was indeed alive with rats. The friends scarcely closed their eyes all night, for no sooner would they drop off than a rat would run up the wall, or drop from the ceiling to the floor with a thud. Finally, in desperation, Matilda arose and searched for some mosquito nets tacked on frames; these at least would keep the intruders off their faces. As the night wore away Helen decided that the only blessing she could find in this discomfort was that to-morrow morning she would not need to arise at the first stroke of

seven, breakfast at half after seven, prepare a lecture at eight and be in the classroom promptly at nine. She could make up all this lost sleep with never a pang of conscience.

Before leaving the village on the next morning, they purchased the leanest, hungriest cat that they could find. She looked as though it would take scores of rats to satisfy her appetite. She proved a valuable asset and the nocturnal visits of the rats steadily decreased.

"I wish we could find as successful a cure for the boat-woman's voice," Helen remarked very often.

As the days went quietly by this woman was the only disturbing element, so to speak, for in spite of the fear of pirates, their voyage passed uneventfully. Helen soon grew accustomed to the shouts and screams of the boatmen as they delivered and executed orders; she found it was their method of letting off steam, but she never got over resenting the quarrelling of the woman. It was inefficient, she felt, as it never seemed to get anywhere. In other ways the traveller's education progressed rapidly. She was very philosophical when she heard that the trip would take anywhere from ten days to three weeks. She soon learned the reason of this, for on some

days they sailed many *li,* and on others the wind was contrary and the river they had now entered was winding, so that their progress scarcely seemed to exceed that of the famous tortoise.

"The turtle eventually arrived, you remember," said Miss Matilda, when defending this mode of locomotion against the taunts of her friend.

"I have learned a great deal, but I have yet to understand the boatmen's mental processes," said Helen one day. "I do not really care, because it makes no difference to me when we arrive, and I would enjoy another month of this care-free existence, but I cannot help wondering by what principle they start on some mornings at four and work all day until six, and on others we weigh anchor at nine and tie up by three in the afternoon. Do you know?"

"No; sometimes it's the wind, and sometimes the desire for sleep, I suppose," said Miss Matilda.

The last day of their voyage seemed to drag terribly; the boatmen simply would not hurry, and Miss Matilda, eager to reach her home, for once tried to urge them on. All persuasions were useless, and at length she aban-

doned the attempt. Though the wind seemed propitious, the sailors tied up at a village at noon and lay down on their deck to smoke and gamble. As was her custom, Miss Matilda gathered a few leaflets together and started off to talk to the women of a hamlet which they saw in the distance. She asked Helen to accompany her, but she refused, saying that she would take a nap.

After a quarter of an hour or so Helen noticed that the family quarrel that always raged while the boat was anchored, was growing hotter and hotter, and she tried in vain to get some sleep. The people might have been in the same room, so plainly could she hear them. Then followed a sudden lull for a few minutes, and just as she was congratulating herself that it was all over, there arose the most blood-curdling screams from the bank. This was too much! The woman was surely being murdered, and Helen ran out on deck to find a boatman beating his wife's head against the river bank. Her hair was streaming down her back, her eyes bulging, and Helen felt that in a moment all would be over. A crowd had collected and were watching open-mouthed, but not one finger was lifted in the wife's behalf. Helen had not a

word of Chinese and, of course, the people knew no English; but, lifting her voice as loudly as she could, and pointing with an accusing hand at the man, she commanded him to stop. Something in her manner conveyed the meaning her words could not, and in his surprise the man let go his hold and the woman retreated hastily toward the village.

Very weak and trembling, for she did not know what the crowd might do, Helen retired into the cabin. She felt, however, that a Carnegie medal was certainly due her for saving a human life. When Matilda returned she recounted her story with many thrills, but Miss Kellogg's reply completely dashed her.

"I heard the story as I came along. I think perhaps you might better have left the man alone, for the woman wanted to go to the village to buy opium and he was trying to stop her. Now she is gone, and we will have to wait for her to return, as it would not do to leave her here alone. I am afraid it will be impossible now to make Feng Ti Fu to-night. I am awfully sorry too, as I am anxious to show you my women; they are so quiet and refined, a great contrast to this one."

Helen could not refrain from a laugh at the anticlimax to her exploit. "Anyway, I think

I may consider myself a complete cure," she said. "Think how I would have fretted six months ago over this delay, and now the only thing I mind is to have disappointed you."

"It is as well you came this year," her friend replied. "Next year the railroad will be finished and we will make the trip in ten hours instead of three weeks, and you would then have to do it all by the time-table."

On the next morning, with a splendid wind, they sailed into view of East and West mountains, and saw the city of Feng Ti Fu nestled at their feet. Then Helen, having mastered the lesson that time and house-boats wait for everybody, regretfully turned her back on the river and went ashore.

It was on a very similar morning, ten months later, that she entered the rocky portals of San Francisco harbour, and felt another pang of regret that this voyage, too, was over and her trip to the East nothing but a pleasant memory. All the way across the continent, with a superior smile she watched the hurrying crowds. "How little they realise the pleasure of living in their hurry to achieve," she thought. "But I can never, never forget."

On stepping out of the Grand Central Terminal she saw that the car which she wanted

was standing nearly half a block away. The people who had come off the train started to run, and picking up her grip she ran too, and while she was climbing on the platform, the conductor shouted, "Step lively, please!"

As Helen seated herself, she looked out of the rear door of her trolley to see another car which she could have taken standing directly behind. By her running she had saved exactly thirty seconds. When college opened that autumn the very first lecture that Helen delivered to a class of expectant, eager freshmen, was entitled "The Force of Habit."

X

FOREIGN MAGIC

Part I

IT may as well be admitted in the beginning that Wang Sao Tze was no angel. Her neighbours would say, with a shake of the head, when her shrill scoldings disturbed the peace of the hamlet, "There is no doubt that Wang Sao Tze's *pechih* (disposition) is very bad." Her husband certainly thought so, and he had cause to know.

Like many other persons with stormy tempers, Wang Sao Tze possessed a capable pair of hands and a clear brain; therein, perhaps, lay the difficulty, for her husband was notoriously weak, and without her strong hand at the helm the family fortunes would have been wrecked long ago. She was decidedly the captain of her own soul and of her husband's as well, not to mention all the little Wangs. The village elders murmured, however, when

she sought to apply successful home tactics to community affairs.

One morning when the spring wheat in the fields surrounding the Twin Dog Village was a sea of green, Wang Sao Tze stood in her doorway talking to an itinerant quack doctor in stentorian tones: "I have taken your powdered dragon's bones and your snake fangs, and the pain is worse, I tell you; and now you want to stick red hot needles into my side, which will increase the agony tenfold! It is all a game to bleed me of *cash,* and I want no more of you." Turning to the oven, she raised a dish of boiling fat and threatened to pour its contents over the doctor, who beat a hasty but highly strategic retreat down the street.

But Wang Sao Tze was stopped in her first impulse of pursuit by a most unexpected sight. Coming down the crooked lane, which was to the citizens of the hamlet what the Champs Élysées is to the Parisians, was a tiny procession. In the lead were two leisurely-going donkeys carefully watching their steps for fear of mud-holes, while a collection of shouting boys and barking dogs brought up the rear, making themselves generally obnoxious.

What turned Wang Sao Tze almost to stone, however, and froze the torrent of abuse on her lips, was the sight of an unmistakably foreign woman riding upon the first donkey. The fact that she wore a Chinese coat, hat, skirt, and shoes, could not disguise from sharp hostile eyes that her hair was brown and wavy, and her features Occidental.

Many a time and oft had Wang Sao Tze rehearsed to an admiring group of villagers what her course of action and conversation would be—if screaming at the top of one's lungs may be called conversation—should a foreigner ever have the hardihood to show himself on their streets. That the first visitor might be a woman never had occurred to her; but there seemed no reason to think that the same tactics would not be effectual in this case.

While she was adapting her mental processes to meet the new condition, the stranger had slipped from her donkey, and, standing directly in front of Wang Sao Tze, she made a deep bow that could have been learned only in China's first circles. In a sweet, low voice, without one trace of fear, she inquired:

"May I ask your honourable name?"

Startled at being greeted with such perfect

courtesy, Wang Sao Tze's voice, which had been about to scream at a high pitch, *"Yang Gwie Tze!"* (Foreign Devil), cracked as she tried to lower it to the tone required in polite society.

"My humble name is Wang," she said.

Perceiving her advantage, the lady began to ply her with questions so rapidly that she prevented the Chinese woman from putting into practice any hostile intent. At last she inquired, "Is there no inn in the village where I may buy a cup of tea? I have travelled many *li* to-day and have many still to go, and I am very thirsty."

Greatly to her own surprise, and still more so to that of her neighbours, who had gathered at a safe distance, Wang Sao Tze found herself saying in a voice of honeyed sweetness, "If the foreign lady will forgive my great presumption, I would ask her to enter my unworthy door and drink my tea, though it is not fit to offer a great *taitai* (lady) like yourself."

The house stood in a shabby court and was a poor place indeed, with its mud walls and straw thatched roof and earthen floor. It had no windows and the only air permitted to enter came in by way of the open door, or

through chinks in the walls. A forlorn dog worried a bone in the corner, and a black pig, to whom water was an unknown quantity, made itself at home in a pile of refuse at one end of the court; while in the other, a donkey raised a discordant sound of welcome to his comrades in the street. From the beams of the ceiling strings of onions, garlic, and other vegetables were hung, and dried hams and sausages advertised the fact that Wang Sao Tze was a thrifty manager of domestic affairs who looked well to the ways of her household. On one side of the room the kitchen god held sway, and not far from it was the ancestral tablet. Beyond these aids to worship there was no attempt at adornment of any kind unless a coffin, which stood in a position where the eye fell on it immediately upon entering the door, could be so called. It is certainly true that Wang Sao Tze regarded this coffin as the apple of her eye, for was it not a pleasant reminder that her decent burial was assured? Two rude benches, a table, and an oven completed the furnishings of the interior.

With an unconscious hospitality that was really beautiful, Wang Sao Tze bowed her guest to the seat of honour, while the latter,

after duly protesting her unworthiness, finally accepted it. Then Wang Sao Tze, all her prejudices forgotten, bestirred herself in the preparation of tea, while the staring villagers almost asphyxiated the two women by crowding around the door, and effectually shutting off the sweet May breeze.

Question after question was poured forth upon the tired traveller, who answered with an unending patience. To their great amazement her listeners had found out that she had reached the marriageable age of thirty without accomplishing matrimony, an unheard-of situation to their minds. She claimed to have come to China to tell them some message of good news; exactly what it was they could not understand. And one old dame voiced the feelings of all when she exclaimed, "You might better far have spent the money on a dowry, for I hear it costs at least one hundred *taels* to come from your country, and you could have made a fitting marriage with that large sum."

In the street the stranger's donkey boy held another audience under his spell by marvellous accounts of the manners and possessions of the foreigners of Feng Ti Fu. The story of the wonders lost nothing in the telling, and

THE POPULAR VEHICLE HOLDS A HOMEWARD-BOUND PATIENT
REJOICING IN THE HOSPITAL MAGIC

as the guest made her final bow of gratitude she heard him say, "Oh, yes, he is a very great doctor, indeed; he makes the blind to see and the lame to walk. And once, they say—it was before my time and I cannot vouch for it myself—he raised a man from the dead."

At these astounding words Wang Sao Tze pricked up her ears, and, turning to the lady, asked in an eager whisper, "Is this what he says true? Could he cure me too? I have a terrible pain in my side which grows worse every day. I asked the old quack here to cure it, but he is not worth a string of *cash.*"

"Come to the hospital, Wang Sao Tze; my sister is also a doctor there, and between the two of them I think that they could help you; but if they cannot, they will tell you truly."

This was too sudden a step for Wang Sao Tze, who a short time ago had only been too eager for an opportunity to revile all foreigners. She shook her head. "My husband would never allow it," she said, with a sudden meekness that would have been very laughable to one who knew her well.

As the foreigner waved a farewell to the little group, she said to Wang Sao Tze, "If you ever want a friend, come to me, Wang Sao Tze." Such kindly words had never fal-

len on this woman's ears before, and she repeated them over and over again to herself, saying, "I believe she really meant it; she did not say it to be polite."

For many days thereafter the stranger's visit was the wonder of the village, and in the warm evenings the women would gather about their doors and gossip about this foreigner, who had come to them out of the unknown to be so quickly swallowed up again. Only Wang Sao Tze listened a little apart, thinking of her new friend and pondering pleasant words in her heart.

In the months that followed the harvest was garnered, the autumn crops were sown, and the village life continued the same routine that it had known for the last two thousand years. No transformation could be noticed in Wang Sao Tze; in fact, she daily grew more unbearable, and her husband made it a point to absent himself as much as possible, although one had to go a long distance to get away from the sound of her voice when once she began her revilings. If by chance in one of her rages she started down the street, strong men would quail and as quietly as possible slink out of her path.

No one realised, not even she herself, that the

increasing pain which she endured was in part the cause of her ungovernable temper. Frequently she thought of the hospital, but always she dismissed the idea, for who can measure the courage it would take for a woman of her condition, who had never been ten *li* away from her own village, to trust herself to aliens?

At length one day her husband found her stretched unconscious on the floor. True, she soon regained consciousness, but this attack crystallised her resolution; as soon as she could speak, she turned to her husband and weakly announced, "I am going to the foreign hospital at Feng Ti Fu."

Wang Si Fu fairly gasped with astonishment; of the many surprises his wife had sprung upon him, this was the most startling. "They will cast the evil eye on you and on the whole village," he cried, "and what is more, it is not fitting, and I will never allow it."

That was enough for Wang Sao Tze; she had meant to throw out the suggestion as a feeler, and if her husband had agreed she would have let the matter drop. Such opposition was not to be submitted to for a moment, and she immediately set about preparations for her departure. With an absolutely

un-Oriental swiftness she put her household in order. The children were left in the care of her daughter-in-law, for she lived on the same court and could easily manage both homes.

On the following morning Wang Sao Tze mounted their donkey; her bundle of clothes was placed behind her back, and she intimated to her husband, who was to lead the steed, that she was ready to depart. A few firecrackers —they were very few—were set off to propitiate the evil spirits and to ensure a prosperous journey and a safe return. The donkey did not like the noise and started at such a brisk trot that Wang Si Fu had difficulty in keeping up with him, and this cut off all possibility of conversation, which under the circumstances was just as well.

They had made a very early start, and the sun had not yet arisen when they were well on their road; by ten of the clock the walls of Feng Ti Fu came in sight, and at half after ten exactly, they drew up at the gate of the hospital. Wang Sao Tze was absolutely unmoved as far as her outward expression went, but Wang Si Fu was fairly green with fear; he breathed very hard and his hand shook as he knocked on the gate at his wife's bidding. For now were they not about to enter the

lion's den indeed, and who knew how soon their bones would be ground into fine white powder?

A bowing gatekeeper threw the door back and, after directing Wang Si Fu as to where he might take the donkey, he pointed up the long stone steps that led to the woman's entrance. Wang Sao Tze wearily followed his directions. As she toiled up the steps she saw coming out of the hospital a familiar form, and recognised the face of the foreign lady whom she had seen so many months before.

"Oh, Miss Waring, I've come, I've come!" she called. For a moment the foreigner hesitated; who was this woman who evidently thought that her whole happiness was bound up in the fact that she had come to the hospital? Then she recognised Wang Sao Tze's forceful features, and going eagerly forward, she joyfully cried, "I am glad that you wanted a friend, Wang Sao Tze, and came to find me." From that moment she captured Wang Sao Tze's heart, and banished her fear entirely.

In Anne Waring's company the dreaded examination was easy, and when the doctor announced that her case was serious but cur-

able, requiring, however, an operation and several weeks and perhaps months of treatment, she consented without a word. As briefly as need be she ordered her husband home, saying he could expect her when he saw her.

For the first day or two all went merrily, everything was so new and strange and comfortable withal, Wang Sao Tze's temper was lulled to sleep, and no one suspected its sharp power. Every morning there was a short service, and Wang Sao Tze listened as though in a daze, although she liked the music and the sweet voice of her friend and her winsome smile. She was shown a brightly coloured picture-card and told she could have it for her own if she would learn a verse of a hymn, which one of the children in the ward offered to teach her. The gay colours seemed to her the most beautiful thing she had ever seen, and so she eagerly consented.

One morning, however, in passing her, one of the women spilled a bowl of hot tea on Wang Sao Tze's card. Then the tempest broke; the hospital had never heard anything to equal it; the storm of rage and abuse would have been almost artistic had it not been so frightful. The whole ward quailed before it; dying patients sat up in their beds, while any

one in her vicinity, who was able to walk, fled.

The foreigners were sent for, and Wang Sao Tze, inwardly pleased at the sensation she was causing, and beside herself with rage, kept growing more violent every minute. So noisy was she that she did not hear a door open behind her, and was quite startled when a gentle hand was laid on her arm and she beheld her foreign friend. This friend's expression made Wang Sao Tze stop a moment; it was not fear, that she was used to seeing, but a look of disappointment and grief, and almost of abhorrence.

"Wang Sao Tze, be still!" said her friend in a firm voice. "Are you not ashamed to have any respectable person hear such vile words? How can you bear to have those children know that you have those loathsome thoughts? You will have to go home without being cured, for we cannot have such things said here."

Now, all her life Wang Sao Tze had been accustomed to have people cower before her, and she considered her rages rather clever. To have them spoken of in this way was an unpleasant surprise, and she started again, but the hand was still firm on her arm.

"Come with me!" she was commanded, and she was pushed into a small room.

"I shall lock you in here until you are yourself again; remember the way you are acting is not the custom here, and you are losing face."

Then seven other demons more dreadful than the first seemed to enter into Wang Sao Tze. That she, the autocrat of her home, nay of the whole village, should be treated like a naughty child was unbearable. She beat her head against the wall and tore her hair, while her voice rose and fell, and all the time the still small voice of shame kept whispering in her heart. Like her native typhoon the storm raged all that day; it was unbelievable that any human frame could keep it up so steadily. But, like the wind of the tempest, her voice began to die down at sunset, and when the doctor made her evening rounds the noise had ceased and she found Wang Sao Tze lying fast asleep from utter exhaustion. Tenderly they lifted her upon her bed, but she never stirred.

When Wang Sao Tze awoke the next morning she found herself gazing into the sad eyes of her friend. For a moment she felt inclined to scream again, but something in their steady depths held her quiet, and she sullenly turned her face to the wall.

The soft voice spoke in words that she alone

could hear, "Wang Sao Tze, I am still your friend; if you want me, send for me." Then she moved quietly away.

The next few days were hard enough for Wang Sao Tze; she found that Miss Waring had spoken only too truly when she said that she had lost face. Women she had been friendly with, and who had done her many kindnesses, shunned her or cast scornful glances in her direction; and, hardest of all, the little child, of whom she had made a pet, refused to come near her, and ran and hid when she approached.

At last she sent for Miss Waring and said, "Miss Waring, I do not understand your strange foreign ways; in the village all I had to do to get what I wanted was to go into a rage, and I got it, and the neighbours seemed to think it was the proper way, for there the woman who raged the longest and loudest came out victorious. But here it is different; they all seem to despise me. I have lost all face; I might as well go home."

"Oh, do you not understand? We are trying to teach you a better way. Love and kindness are stronger than all rage, for people will do things for love they would never do for anger. I came to China because of

love for the people, but if I had had hate in my heart I should have stayed in my own country; so love drew me all these thousands of miles. Do you not see when you are angry you spoil the spirit of the place, and make it like a den of snarling dogs? Please remember also it does you more harm than it can possibly do any one else, for it spoils your happiness."

"Well, Miss Waring, your ways are very strange, and may work here, but you do not know our village. I will think over your words."

Shortly after this conversation Wang Sao Tze was operated upon, and for several weeks was very ill, so that there was no display of anger. In her time of weakness she unconsciously absorbed many a lesson from her foreign friends and from the people in the wards. The very gentleness with which the doctor dressed her wound was a revelation in kindness to her. The patience of the nurse, who never seemed to tire, and who never said a sharp word, no matter how trying the sick woman might be, all made her marvel. Now Wang Sao Tze was no fool, and by the time she was able to crawl around the wards she

began to realise that there might be something in the new ways.

She knew that without the operation she would certainly have died a painful death; and if the foreigners could be so amazingly clever about illness, why should they not be right about this doctrine of love they talked so much about? Moreover, the operation removed the terrible nagging pain from which she had suffered so many years, and without it she found that she was far less inclined to burst into a passion. Do not think that in a few short days this woman, who had been surrounded with the blackest forms of immorality and superstition from her earliest childhood, was turned at once into a Raphael's cherub, for that was far from the case. She had many a battle with her old vices, and many a time she fell. But gradually, as the weeks went by, her nature softened and the hard lines of suffering and temper on her face changed, and she began to look, as one of the foreign children expressed it, "as if a lamp had been lighted in her face."

She was forced to stay in the hospital several months for treatment, and as she grew stronger she helped with the light work in the wards, learning many a lesson about hygiene

and cleanliness. She was a good worker and quick at her tasks, so that she would have plenty of time to sit and pore over a simple reading book. At this she was very much slower, but she was eager to learn enough to be able to read the story of the Man who first went among poor people, healing their diseases and forgiving their bad tempers, "which may have been exactly like mine," she often thought.

One Saturday morning the doctor examined her and announced that she was absolutely well and might return home on Monday. Wang Sao Tze was not too well pleased at this; all the joy that she had ever known was centred around the hospital, and her face was overcast as she went to tell the news and get her treasures together. These consisted of a collection of picture-cards, together with a hymn-book and Testament. Her face was anything but a sunbeam for the remainder of that day, and when she started for church the next morning with her books tied up in a gaily coloured handkerchief, she was still the personification of gloom.

It was a matchless winter day with the sky an unfathomable blue; the air stirred one's pulses and made one glad to be alive. The women sat in the transepts and the men in

the main aisle of the church. Wang Sao Tze enjoyed it all, the beautiful building, the choir, and the responses. She had learned that it was decidedly not the thing to talk aloud throughout the service, or call to an acquaintance in a distant corner, and she liked the importance which was attached to one who kept newcomers in order. When the Chinese pastor arose to preach, she settled herself back with a well satisfied air to listen.

With quiet dignity he read the words, "Go home to thy friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for thee and has had compassion on thee." Simply he drew the picture of that scene beside the Galilean lake, and of the man who had lately been healed, and of the Master's command to him. Skilfully he applied the lesson to these new believers in another Oriental land; and they seemed to grasp the thought as many a more sophisticated audience has failed to do, for all eyes were fixed on the preacher's face. Wang Sao Tze never stirred until the last hymn was sung; then, as one awakened from a trance, she turned from the church.

An hour later Anne Waring was surprised by a loud knock at the front door. She opened it herself to find Wang Sao Tze standing be-

fore her. In her hand was a small bundle tied in a light blue cotton cloth. Before her friend had a chance to speak, Wang Sao Tze said, "Well, Miss Waring, I have come to say good-bye, for I'm off."

"Off where?" exclaimed her startled teacher.

"Why, home, to be sure, the way the preacher said, to tell my friends, of course."

"But your husband is coming for you to-morrow; why do you not wait for him? I am afraid you will find it too far."

"If I start now I can reach home by night-fall. My husband can call for my things to-morrow; and you know, teacher, the preacher did not say anything about waiting. He said go right home and tell your friends. Of course, when I heard that I just had to start. I have tarried too long already, but you see I did not know."

After this Anne Waring felt that she could not dissuade her, and she bade the woman an affectionate farewell. With pity and gladness she watched the sturdy figure start off gallantly to meet the conservatism and persecution of a Chinese community single-handed, and she made a resolution that the very first place she visited on her next itinerating trip would be the Twin Dog Village.

Part II

In those days of which I write, the Twin Dog Village, settled as it was in the midst of the most densely populated part of China, had nothing to distinguish it from other villages. It seemed cut from the same piece of cloth as thousands of other hamlets, and matched them so exactly that it would be hard for a stranger to tell without inquiry whether he had reached his destination or had still another *li* of humpy, bumpy by-paths to travel.

There was the usual group of willows shading the little collection of cottages, if the mud huts that the villagers called homes could be dignified by such a name. Beside nearly every house or in front of it there was a little pool of water. The clay for the walls of the dwelling having been dug therefrom, and the hole never having been filled up, water had settled in it, thus making a convenient wash-tub in which the lady of the mansion could do her laundry work. Sometimes fairly large fish

might be seen swimming leisurely back and forth, and it was considered fine sport by the boys of the village to catch the fish in their fingers. In the springtime the chorus of frogs from these innumerable ponds made a volume of sound that would have driven a neurasthenic mad, but fortunately there are no neurasthenics in a Chinese village.

At one end of the hamlet was the usual village well, and here it was, on a lovely spring evening, that three women met, it must be admitted, for a little gossip. The willow wands over their heads were turning a filmy green, and tender little green things were shyly beginning to peep from the near-by fields, while at their feet two unkempt dogs were snarling and fighting, but the women's heads were too close together to heed such things.

The oldest one, a toothless crone with a few grey hairs brushed over an otherwise bald head, was talking, "There is no doubt about it, Wang Sao Tze is mad, quite mad. I knew it from the moment I first laid eyes on her when she returned from the hospital; her face was so changed that she looked altogether different. Any one could have told her it was not safe to meddle with foreigners, but then she always did as she liked, and listened to no ad-

vice. It is certainly plain that they put foreign magic into her tea and that has turned her head. As for me, I would rather bear a thousand agonies than go to Feng Ti Fu to the hospital."

"You speak, as always, like the sages," replied another. "Such new ways are against all custom and may bring the evil eye"—here she touched a charm—"upon the whole village. Do you remember the first evening of her return, how she was all smiles and politeness? Who ever saw Wang Sao Tze polite before? That was not her disposition. Then that night she refused to burn incense to the kitchen god and all the trouble began. In the whole month she has been at home she has only lost her temper once, and then she screamed but a short hour or two, and old Wang Si Fu does not know what to make of it. He actually beat her head against the door the other day because she insisted that she must soon return to Feng Ti Fu for another week of teaching, and he said he would kill her first. He is no longer afraid of her and comes and goes as he pleases."

The third woman now felt that it was her turn to contribute. "Wang Sao Tze may be bewitched; I think she is; I hope she stays

so. Never since she came here as a bride has the village been such a pleasant place to live in. She was always quarrelling, and now we have a little peace. I, for one, think Wang Si Fu a fool not to know when he is well off."

"Well," replied the first, "I might think you were right if it were not for the religion she talks; evil is sure to befall one who will not burn incense to the gods, or go to the temple. But her kindness has been great; she wanted to sit up all night with De De, my grandson, when he was ill and give him some foreign drug that she said would heal him, but it was too big a risk. We could not allow him to take it."

At this moment the subject of their conversation appeared at the other end of the village street. "There she is now," exclaimed the old crone. "See, she has in her hand the book of magic from which she is never parted. We had better separate quickly before she bewitches us, for I have no doubt she knows we have been talking about her. People who use the black art are very clever."

Poor Wang Sao Tze's path had been a good deal like the country roads around her since her return from the hospital at Feng Ti Fu; many were the pitfalls laid for her un-

wary feet, and many the stones over which she stumbled. She had left her foreign friends, who had given her new life and health, full of high hopes of how eagerly she would tell the message to her neighbours, and how joyfully they would listen, but, instead, she found only dull indifference or ignorant prejudice. True, tact was not Wang Sao Tze's strong point; it never had been, because downright measures had always gained what she wanted, and she was too old to begin other methods.

An added difficulty was that Wang Si Fu, her husband, had learned the sweets of liberty in her prolonged absence, and he was loath to return under the bondage that had held him for so many years. When she had summarily torn down the kitchen idol and the ancestral tablet and Wang Si Fu found them in the pool outside the house, it was his turn to give vent to a fit of temper, and for the first time in his married life he had beaten her well. Wang Sao Tze's spirit, however, had remained unbroken; she had learned how to be happy and no one could take away the love she had for her friends at Feng Ti Fu.

Another source of joy was her children; for now that her manners were more gentle, they had ceased to fear her, and they loved to hear

the stories she had to tell about the foreign children. There was something in her mien that drew even the neighbour's children, and they would cluster around her whenever their parents would permit. She also had put into practice some of the laws of neatness, newly acquired but very valuable, and her efforts, though crude, made her home and children seem almost to glow with cleanliness in comparison to those of her neighbours.

The star of hope that she kept ever burning bright before her through all this discouragement, was the thought of the inquirers' class that was to be held in two months and which she had promised to attend. In vain had Wang Si Fu threatened and stormed; to every threat she had always replied, "I am going if I have to crawl on my hands and knees."

On this spring evening Wang Sao Tze was particularly down-hearted, for even the little children, warned by their elders to avoid her, refused to come to hear her recite a hymn that had always been a favourite. She saw the women at the well quickly depart at her approach, and she returned with weary feet to her own house and seated herself at the table. Then taking out her book, with slowly pointing

finger she began to read. So interested did she become that she did not hear a step behind her, and was rudely brought back to her surroundings by a hand snatching at the book and tearing it into pieces.

Wang Si Fu, his face livid with rage, shouted to her, "How many times have I forbidden you to read that accursed book? I will be obeyed, for the village fathers will turn us out and burn our goods if we do not restore the gods to their places. They say that you are bringing down the wrath of the idols upon us all, for there is not a house where they have not had some misfortune since your return, and it is your evil eye that has done it."

With great difficulty Wang Sao Tze restrained her rising temper; it would be so easy to fell Wang Si Fu with one blow of her sturdy fist. Instead, she looked him steadily in the eye and said, "I will never put back the idols; the true God lives in heaven and these hideous idols do not resemble him. They are an insult to him."

Such heresy added fuel to Wang Si Fu's rage, and snatching up a knife that lay on the table, he stabbed her in the breast. Wang Sao Tze dropped like a log at his feet and lay there without moving. Terrified by her death-

like appearance, he sprang to the door to call for aid. In a moment the room was crowded, and the confusion of barking dogs, crying children, and screaming women made hope of recovery seem most doubtful. At length one woman with clearer head than the rest managed to take command. She saw that unless the bleeding was stopped Wang Sao Tze would die, and so she immediately set about trying to staunch the wound. With a certain rude skill she went about her work, by applying a quantity of dirty rags and cobwebs, and by tying up the injured part very tightly, she was at length successful in her efforts.

It was several hours before Wang Sao Tze opened her eyes. But at length toward midnight she stirred and lifting her eyelids for a moment, she glanced slowly around the room as if uncertain where she was, and weakly whispered, "I still expect to go to Feng Ti Fu," and again closed her eyes.

For the next few days public opinion was very much divided in the village. Of course, every one admitted that a husband had a perfect right to do as he liked to his own wife, but among certain circles there was a feeling that he had gone a little too far. It was really a bad policy to kill as frugal and industrious

a wife as Wang Sao Tze. As for Wang Si Fu himself, he had received a fright that greatly subdued him. He was not a hard-hearted man, only weak, and when he saw what he had done, his sudden burst of passion ebbed away, and he felt remorseful and uncertain what course to pursue.

In his dilemma he went to the school-teacher, a man renowned for wisdom as one having all the learning of the sages at his finger tips. He was as much at home in the classics of Mencius and Confucius as the frogs were in their native ponds. He had taken his first degree examinations, and in reality he formed the court of last appeal in the village.

It would not be etiquette for Wang Si Fu to mention his wife's name to another man, but by calling her "she," and a good deal of circumlocution, the teacher, who already knew a good many facts in the case, was able to guess his predicament fairly accurately.

"Your home has been quite peaceful, and well looked after this month, the children happy, and the meals tastily cooked, is it not so? This change has been pleasant after years of storm, has it not?"

Wang Si Fu was forced to admit that it was.

"You have saved *cash,* too, because of this, am I right?"

The seeker for truth consented to this also.

"Well, the classics tell us, 'A perfectly illuminated heart is heaven, a darkened heart is hell.' I advise you to let matters drift a little. The foreigners' doctrine may have something in it, if it teaches peace and diligence."

This so exactly fitted in with Wang Si Fu's innermost feelings that he was glad to accept the suggestion. Still there was one more point, "But the village fathers claim that the gods are angry and will punish us."

"I will talk to the elders," replied the teacher; "the peace of the village is for us to take care of; the gods should protect themselves if they do not want to be torn down."

Wang Si Fu returned home greatly heartened; he could let Wang Sao Tze have her own way when she recovered. In the end it was much easier.

After all, the bleeding was the most serious part of Wang Sao Tze's injury; the knife had escaped the lung, and it was only a matter of time for the wound to heal. By all the laws of hygiene she should have died of infection

from the dirty rags, but she was a healthy woman and escaped.

From this day forward life began to take on brighter hues for Wang Sao Tze; the freedom from the petty persecutions of her husband and her neighbours reacted on her character, and she became bright and cheerful. Nevertheless, she was greatly astonished one morning when Wang Si Fu handed her several dollars and told her that they were to be used for her trip to Feng Ti Fu. She showed her appreciation by so much industry and kindliness that when the day arrived for her departure, her family and friends were really loath to see her go. On her return she did not come empty handed, but brought a goodly store of picture postcards, gospels, and other things to attract the interest of her humble Chinese friends. She presented a copy of the gospels to the school-teacher, who seemed very glad to get it, and asked many intelligent questions about the foreigners, the hospital, and particularly about the boys' school.

"There must be something in it," he said, "to make them do these good works. To build up character is to acquire merit," and he set himself diligently to read the book of Matthew.

Any one who could have seen Wang Sao Tze sitting in her doorway at the set of sun with a group of village folk around her, would easily realise that the New Testament teaching was not a religion foreign to the Chinese. For her methods were a good deal like the Master's of old. Looking out on the harvest fields, very similar to the fields in Palestine, she would tell them of the seed and the sower, of the prodigal son—they had several in their own village—of the man who fell among thieves, and of the woman who lost the coin. They could understand, for they seemed pictures of their own village life, and the Chinese are accustomed to the story form of teaching. Wang Si Fu and the teacher would often come and listen on the outskirts of the group, and the teacher would read a few words from his book.

According to the rules of the church at Feng Ti Fu, inquirers must attend at least two inquirers' classes that were held six months apart, before they could be admitted. Once or twice through the six months, the foreigners had been able to come out to the Twin Dog Village for a brief visit, and to do a little teaching, but it was really the efforts and life of Wang Sao Tze that made Wang Si Fu and

the teacher determined to accompany her to Feng Ti Fu.

"Now I know," she joyfully exclaimed, "why the preacher told me to come home and tell my friends."

To her this class was all important, for after it, if she passed her examination, she would become an active member of the church. It was a very timorous Wang Sao Tze that finally appeared before the session at Feng Ti Fu; she realised her ignorance, and that her knowledge could not compare with that of the city women who had received daily instruction. Very tightly did she clasp the hand of Miss Waring as she sat close beside her.

"Why do you believe the gospel?" she was asked.

"Because Miss Waring says it's true, and she has never yet told me an untruth, and besides any one who knows her must know that there is a God just like the one she tells about."

"Do you love God?"

"How could I not love him after his amazing grace in sending Miss Waring so many thousand miles to teach me?"

There were other questions and other answers wherein love to God and love for Anne

Waring were strangely intermingled, but the session voted to accept her, and the following Sunday Wang Sao Tze became a member of the church at Feng Ti Fu.

From this day forward the new faith gradually spread in the village and after two years of growth and struggle the foreigners were surprised one noon to have the gatekeeper announce that some men from the Twin Dog Village were outside wishing to speak to them. As soon as the greetings were given, the schoolteacher, who acted as spokesman, said,

"We have presumed on your honourable patience in the past far more than is polite, but if you will hear us again, we will try and not be long. For many months we have felt that we should have a house for the worship of God in our village, and to that end we have each laid aside what savings we could afford. We also promise to contribute enough labour to erect a building. We now bring our money to you to know if it is sufficient for the purpose."

A sum of money was laid on the table. To a foreigner it was a paltry sum enough, but saved from the sordid poverty of Chinese homes it was a fortune indeed. The foreigners were quite overcome and gladly promised

that they should have their desire and the men returned home, rejoicing, to tell their good news.

Six years have now elapsed since Wang Sao Tze took the bit in her teeth and went to the hospital at Feng Ti Fu. No longer does the Twin Dog Village exactly resemble the neighbouring villages; it has a character and individuality all its own. An unprecedented prosperity has set in; gambling, opium smoking, and other vices have almost disappeared, and the money spent on these has been put into property and business. The teacher studied in the school in the city, and returned with a new vision of his profession; the boys in the school went to the boarding-school after they had learned all that he could teach them; there they studied carpentry and other trades, and also improved methods of farming.

As a result, the value of land has advanced in the vicinity, and new building is going on apace. When one enters the village, the streets that were once so full of holes have been levelled and some of the ponds filled up. The mud walls of the houses no longer gape with holes, and the thatch that had such a moth-eaten appearance is now kept in order. At the doors the women look neat and well

cared for, and the children are neither so ragged nor so dirty.

Above all, what marks the village from its neighbours is the tiny church standing under the soft shade of the willows by the cool spring, and near it the belfry and the bell, the pride of many a heart; while opposite the school-house holds its sway. And when the work of the day is done, and the labourers turn toward home, their faces lighten and their paces quicken as they catch sight, perhaps several *li* away, of the bell-tower, for they know that near it is shelter, rest, and peace.

Not long since a carpenter from a neighbouring town was called by business to the hamlet. He walked through it with amazement asking, "How is this? What has happened here?" The schoolmaster did the honours, explaining the change and general prosperity.

"Do you tell me that the new doctrine did all this?" the visitor asked. "Why have I not known about it before? Every one told me it was to teach men how to die, but instead it teaches them how to live."

To-day, of all the families in the village, Wang Sao Tze's is the happiest, for she is capable and thrifty, and whatever she does

seems to prosper. All the military lords of creation might talk to her until doomsday about the power of force, but Wang Sao Tze knows better, for she has tried both love and hate and has found from her own experience that love is the greatest thing in the world. And the universal verdict will surely be that it was a fortunate day for the Twin Dog Village when the foreigners put magic in Wang Sao Tze's tea.

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